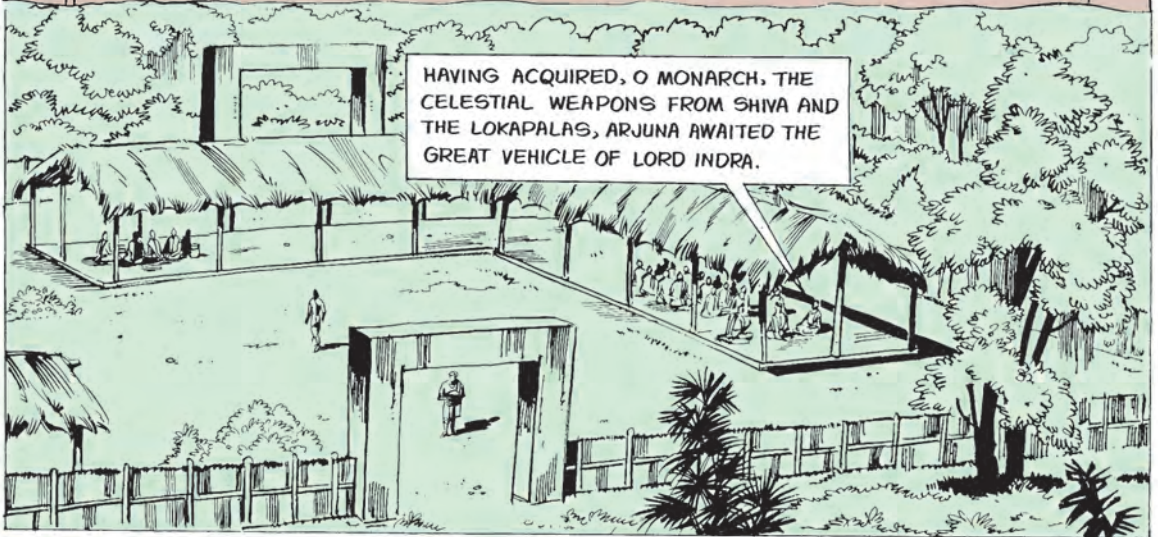


Mahabharata-21

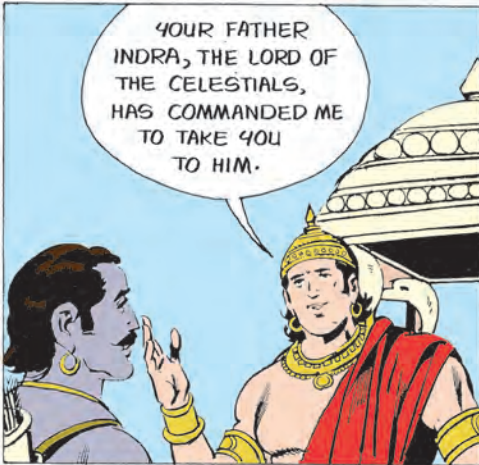
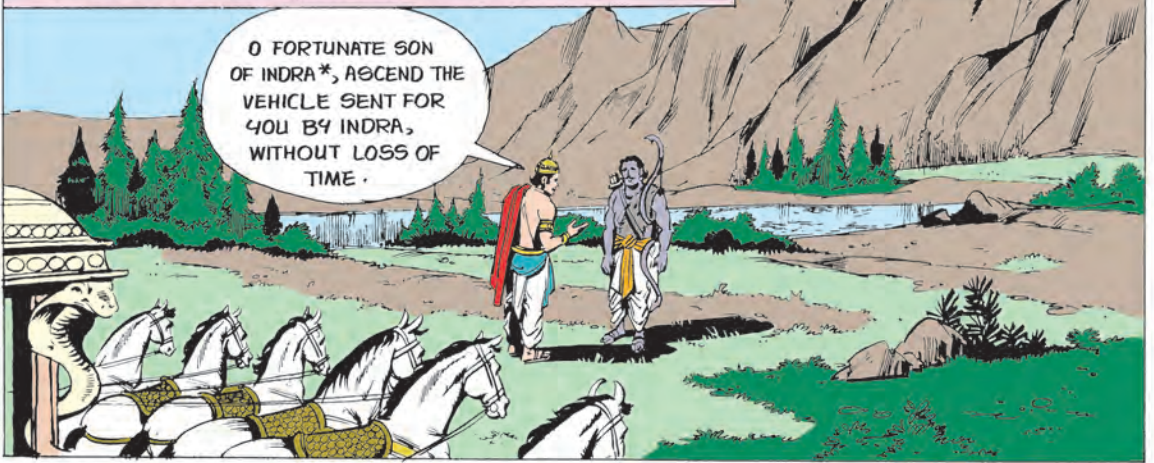
ARJUNA IN INDRALOKA



"JUST THEN THE VEHICLE GUIDED, BY MATALI CAME THROUGH THE CLOUDS, ILLUMINATING THE HEAVENS.



"AND AS ARJUNA WAS THINKING ABOUT THE VEHICLE, MATALI DESCENDED FROM IT AND ADDRESSED HIM THUS —



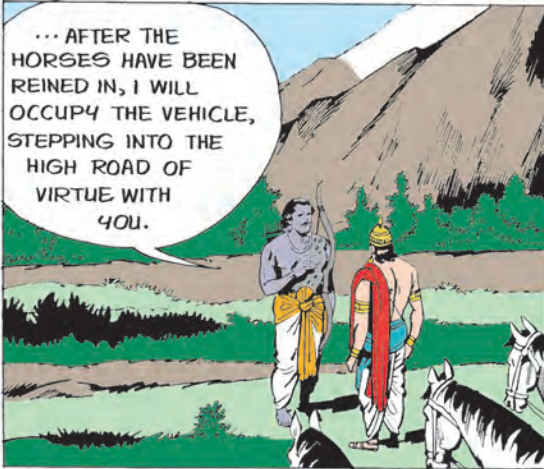
* ARJUNA WAS BORN WITH THE BLESSING OF INDRA.

"ARJUNA REPLIED —

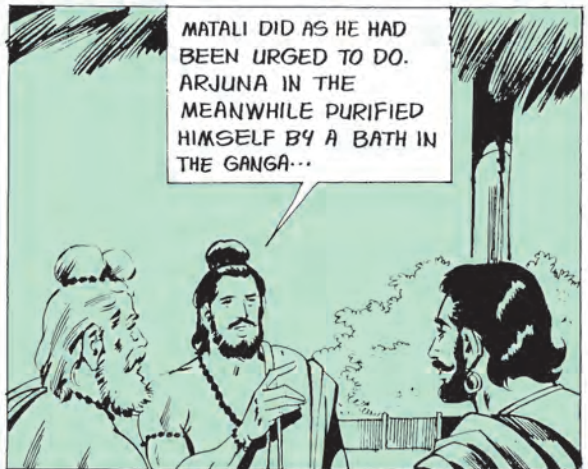
O MATALI, HE WHO HAS NOT ACQUIRED ASCETIC MERIT DOES NOT DESERVE TO RIDE THIS VEHICLE. SO YOU ASCEND FIRST AND...



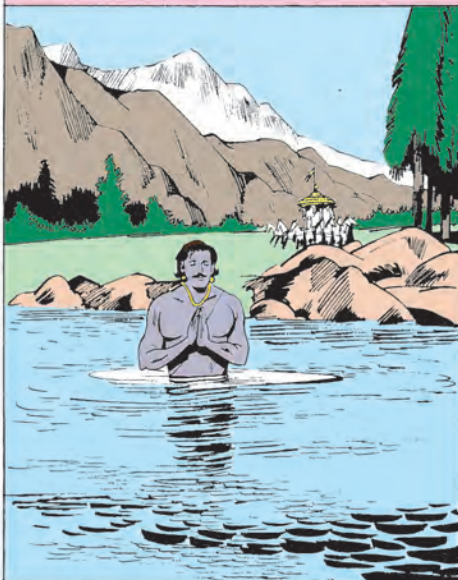
... AFTER THE HORSES HAVE BEEN REINED IN, I WILL OCCUPY THE VEHICLE, STEPPING INTO THE HIGH ROAD OF VIRTUE WITH YOU.



MATALI DID AS HE HAD BEEN URGED TO DO. ARJUNA IN THE MEANWHILE PURIFIED HIMSELF BY A BATH IN THE GANGA...



"... REPEATED HIS CUSTOMARY PRAYERS...



"... AND GRATIFIED THE PITRIS* WITH OBLATIONS OF WATER.



* SOULS OF THE FORE FATHERS

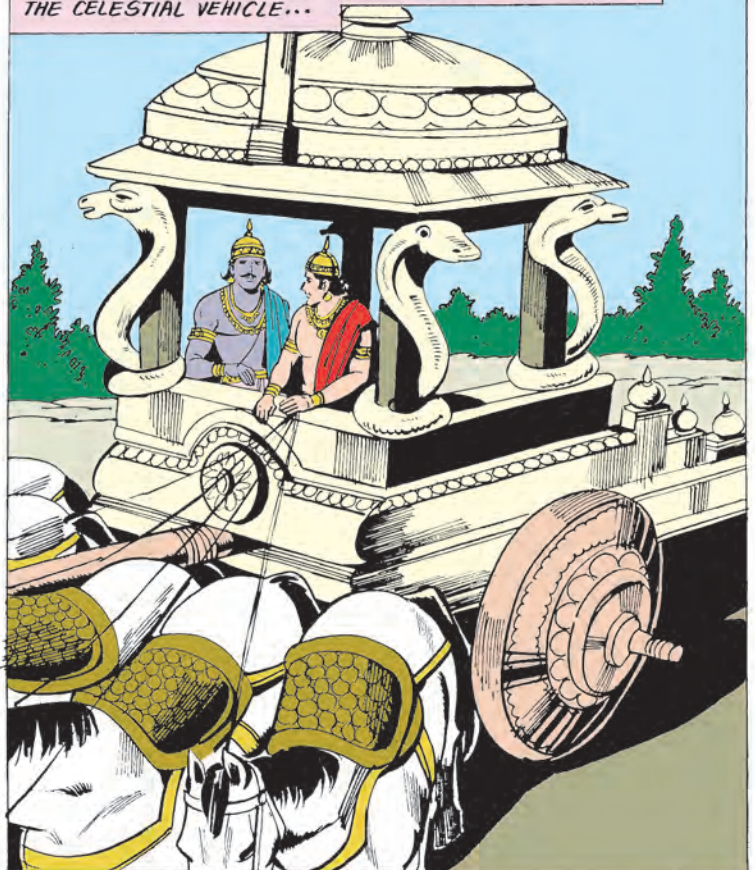
"LASTLY HE PRAYED TO MANDARA — THE KING OF THE MOUNTAINS."



... HAPPILY
HAVE I DWELT
IN YOUR HEIGHTS
AND NOW I BID
YOU FAREWELL.



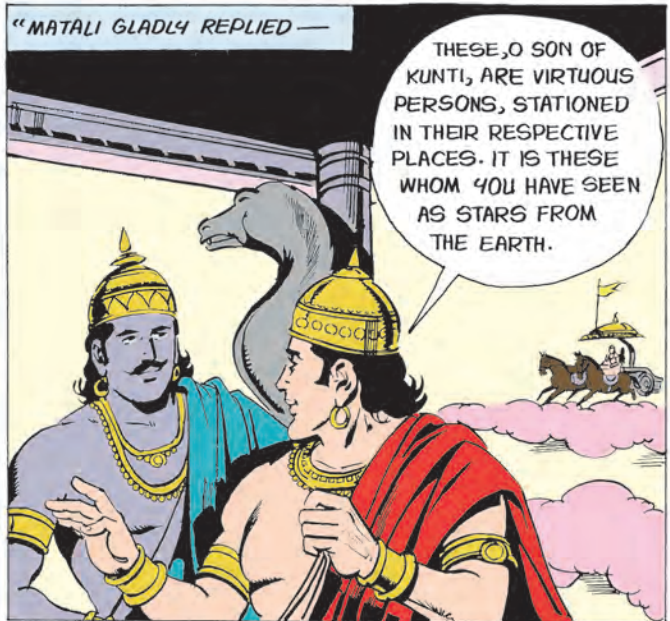
"THEN BLAZING LIKE THE SUN, ARJUNA ASCENDED
THE CELESTIAL VEHICLE..."



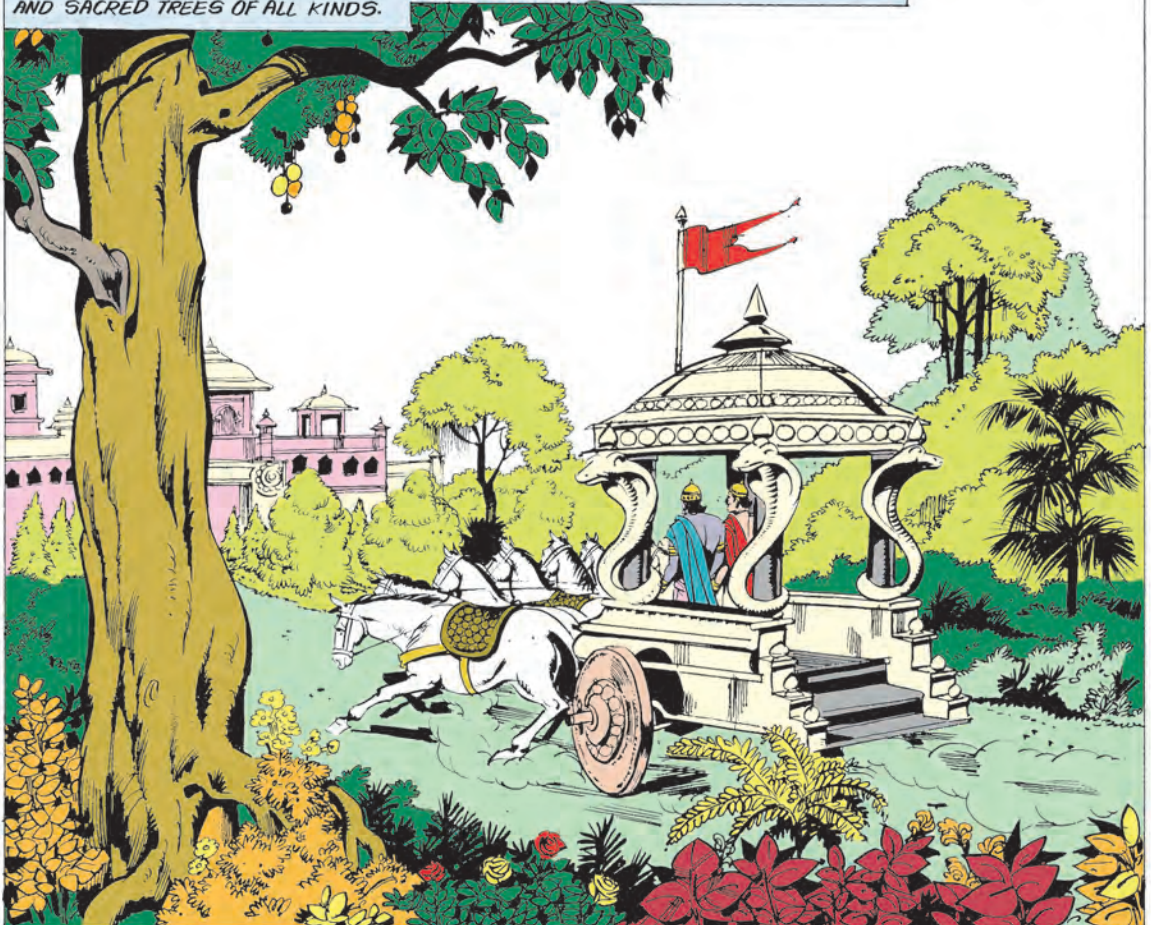
"THE VEHICLE COURSED THROUGH THE SKIES AND THEY BECAME INVISIBLE TO THE MORTALS ON THE EARTH. ARJUNA BEHELD THOUSANDS OF CHARIOTS OF EXTRAORDINARY BEAUTY. THERE WAS NO SUN OR MOON OR FIRE, BUT BRIGHT LIGHT SHONE BY VIRTUE OF ASCETIC MERIT. HE SAW ROYAL SAGES AND GANDHARVAS*, GUHYAKAS† RISHIS AND APSARAS, ALL BLAZING WITH SPLENDOUR.



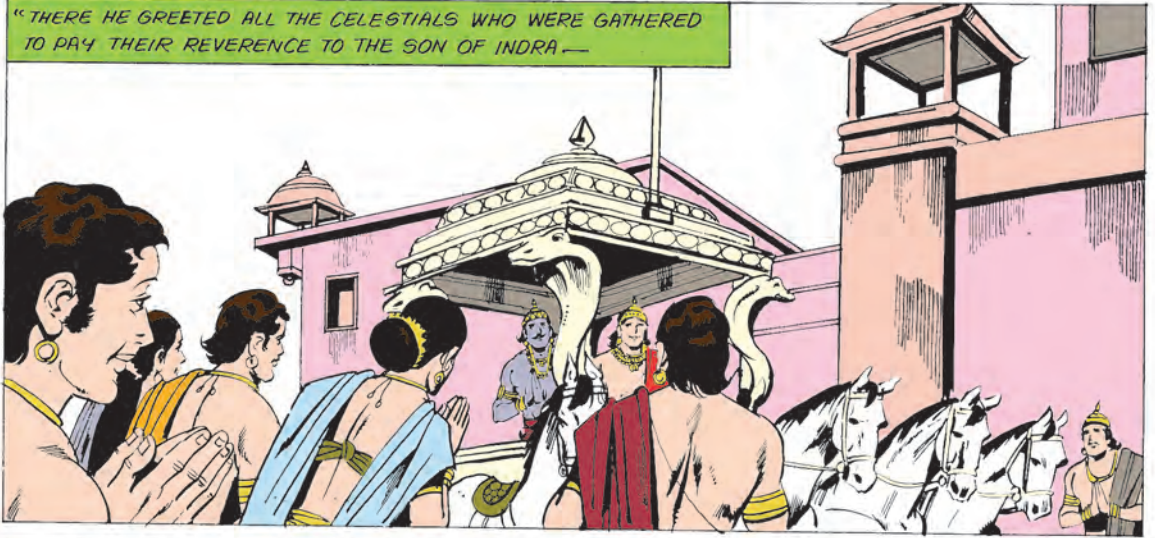
*CELESTIAL MUSICIANS OR SINGERS † FOLLOWERS OF KUBERA.



"AND FINALLY ARJUNA BEHELD AMARAVATI — THE CITY OF INDRA. IT WAS THE REGION OF THE VIRTUOUS ALONE, ADORNED WITH FLOWERS OF EVERY SEASON AND SACRED TREES OF ALL KINDS.



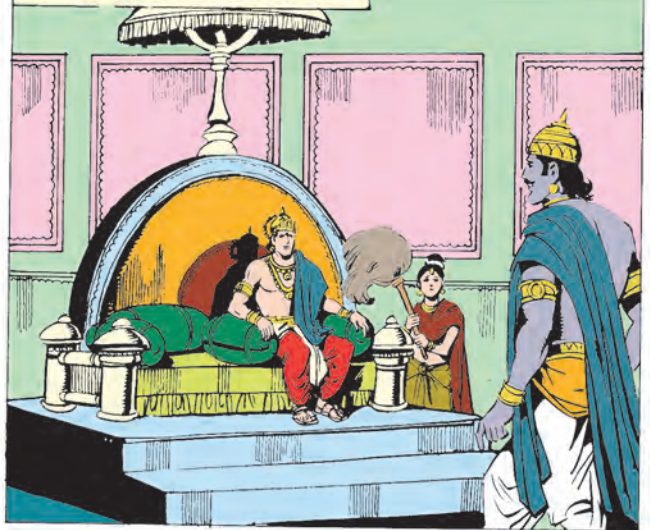
"THERE HE GREETED ALL THE CELESTIALS WHO WERE GATHERED TO PAY THEIR REVERENCE TO THE SON OF INDRA —



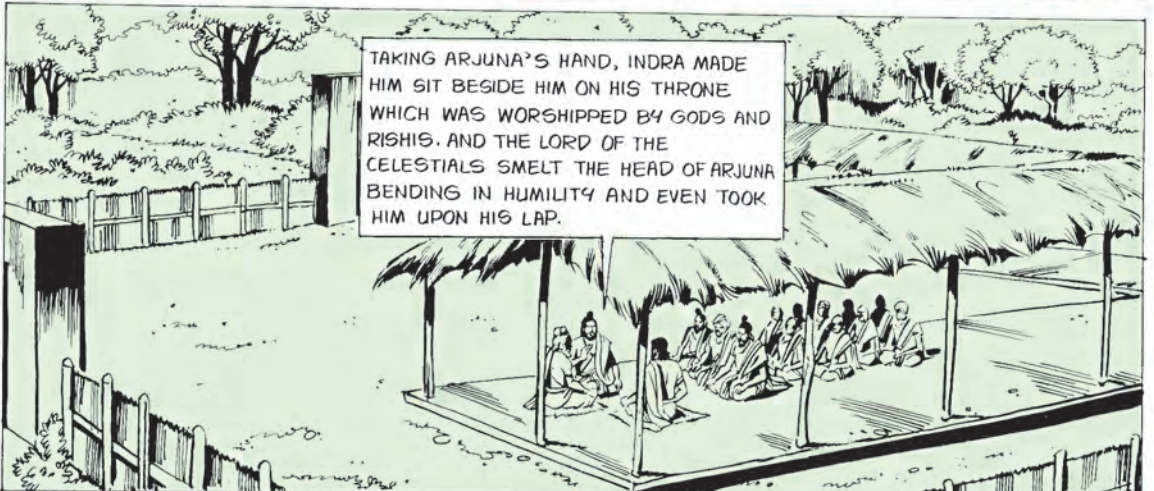
"WHEN HE FINALLY ARRIVED AT THE GATEWAY TO THE ABODE OF INDRA, HE WAS GREETED BY BARDS AND SINGERS AND BEAUTIFUL APSARAS.



"ARJUNA THEN PROCEEDED TO PAY HIS RESPECTS TO THE GREAT LORD INDRA —



TAKING ARJUNA'S HAND, INDRA MADE HIM SIT BESIDE HIM ON HIS THRONE WHICH WAS WORSHIPPED BY GODS AND RISHIS. AND THE LORD OF THE CELESTIALS SMELT THE HEAD OF ARJUNA BENDING IN HUMILITY AND EVEN TOOK HIM UPON HIS LAP.



"AND AS FATHER AND SON SAT, EACH RADIANT IN HIS GLORY, THE APSARAS DANCED AND SANG TO THEM."



"SENSING WHAT WAS IN THE MIND OF INDRA, THE GODS HASTENED TO PAY OBEISANCE TO THE SON OF KUNTI."



"THEY THEN USHERED ARJUNA INTO THE PALACE OF INDRA..."



"...WHERE HE LIVED IN COMFORT."



"WITH THE HELP OF HIS DIVINE FATHER HE CONTINUED TO ACQUIRE THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GREAT WEAPONS ALL THE WHILE."



"INDRA GAVE AWAY THE VAJRA, HIS FAVOURITE WEAPON OF IRRESISTABLE FORCE..."

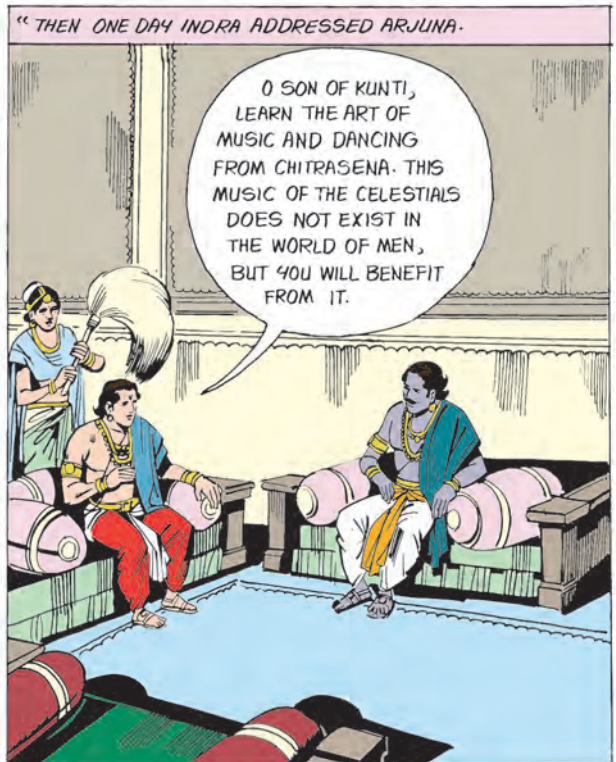
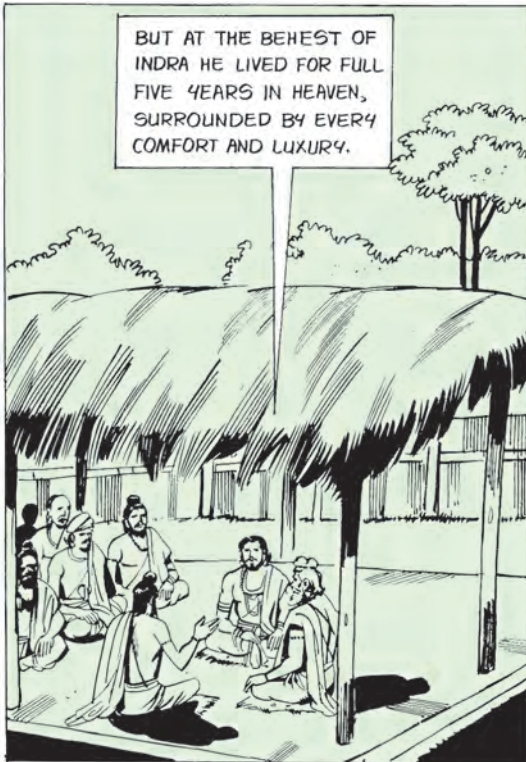


"...WHICH CAUSES THE CLOUDS TO PRODUCE THUNDER AND THE PEACOCKS TO DANCE."

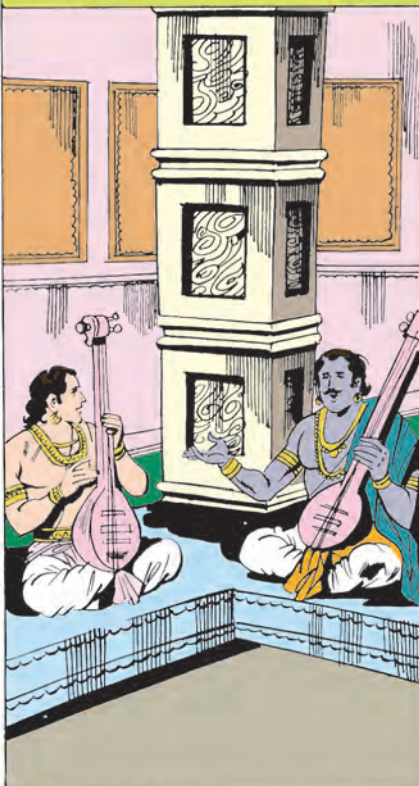


"THE SON OF KUNTI REMEMBERED HIS BROTHERS FOR WHOSE SAKE HE HAD SET OUT IN HIS QUEST FOR WEAPONS."



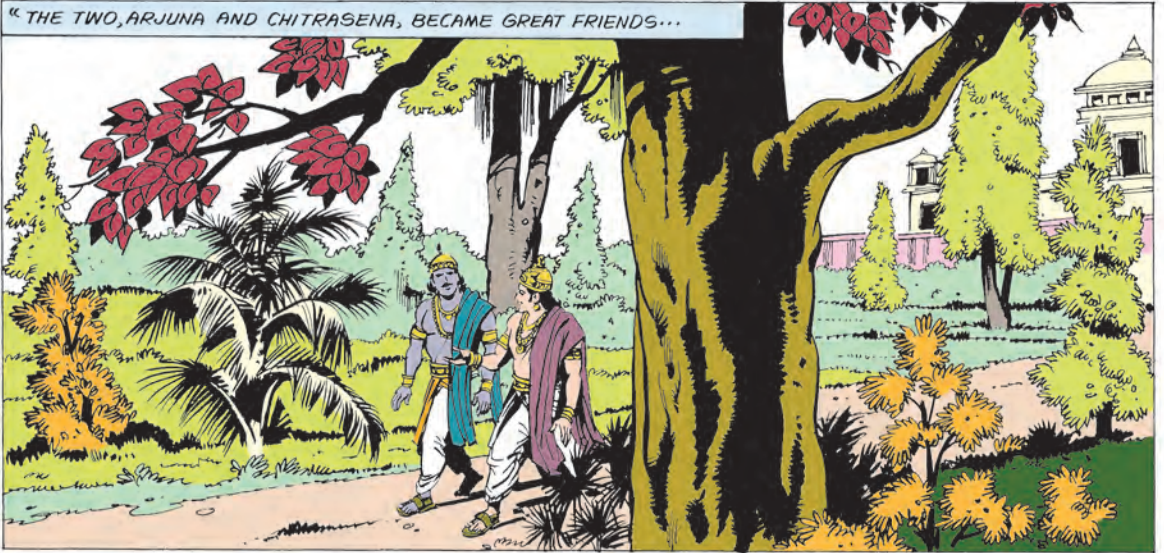


“ SO ARJUNA, UNDER THE EXPERT GUIDANCE OF CHITRASENA, MASTERED THE CELESTIAL ARTS OF DANCE AND MUSIC... *

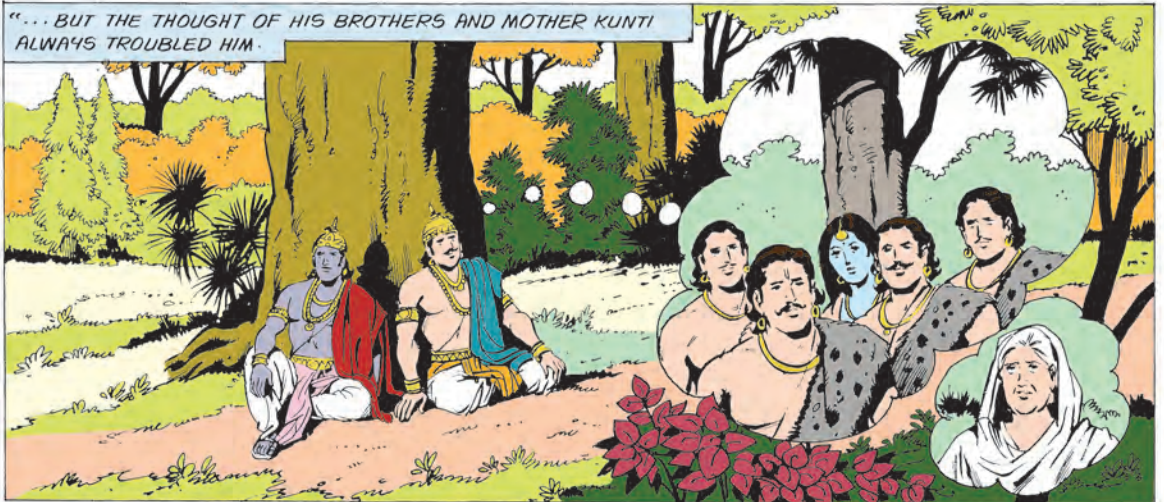


* THIS KNOWLEDGE LATER HELPED ARJUNA WHILE IN DISGUISE.

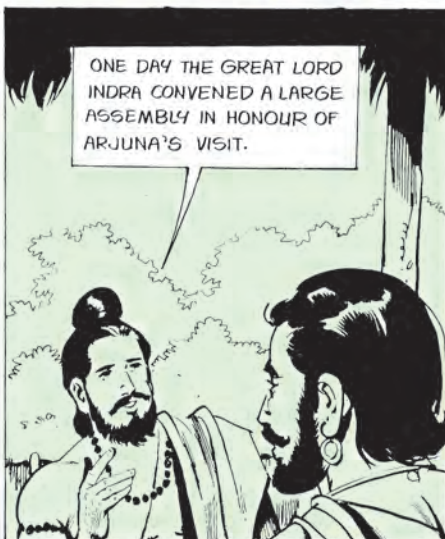
"THE TWO, ARJUNA AND CHITRASENA, BECAME GREAT FRIENDS..."



"... BUT THE THOUGHT OF HIS BROTHERS AND MOTHER KUNTI ALWAYS TROUBLED HIM."



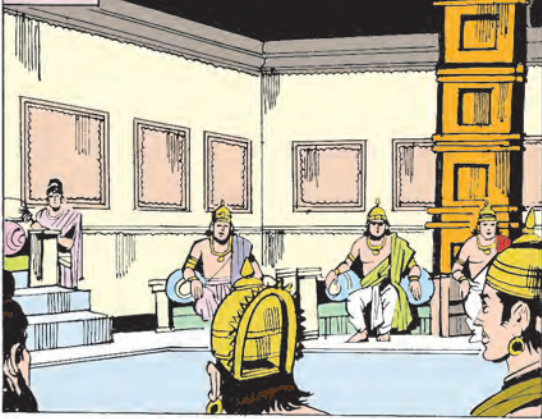
ONE DAY THE GREAT LORD INDRA CONVENED A LARGE ASSEMBLY IN HONOUR OF ARJUNA'S VISIT.



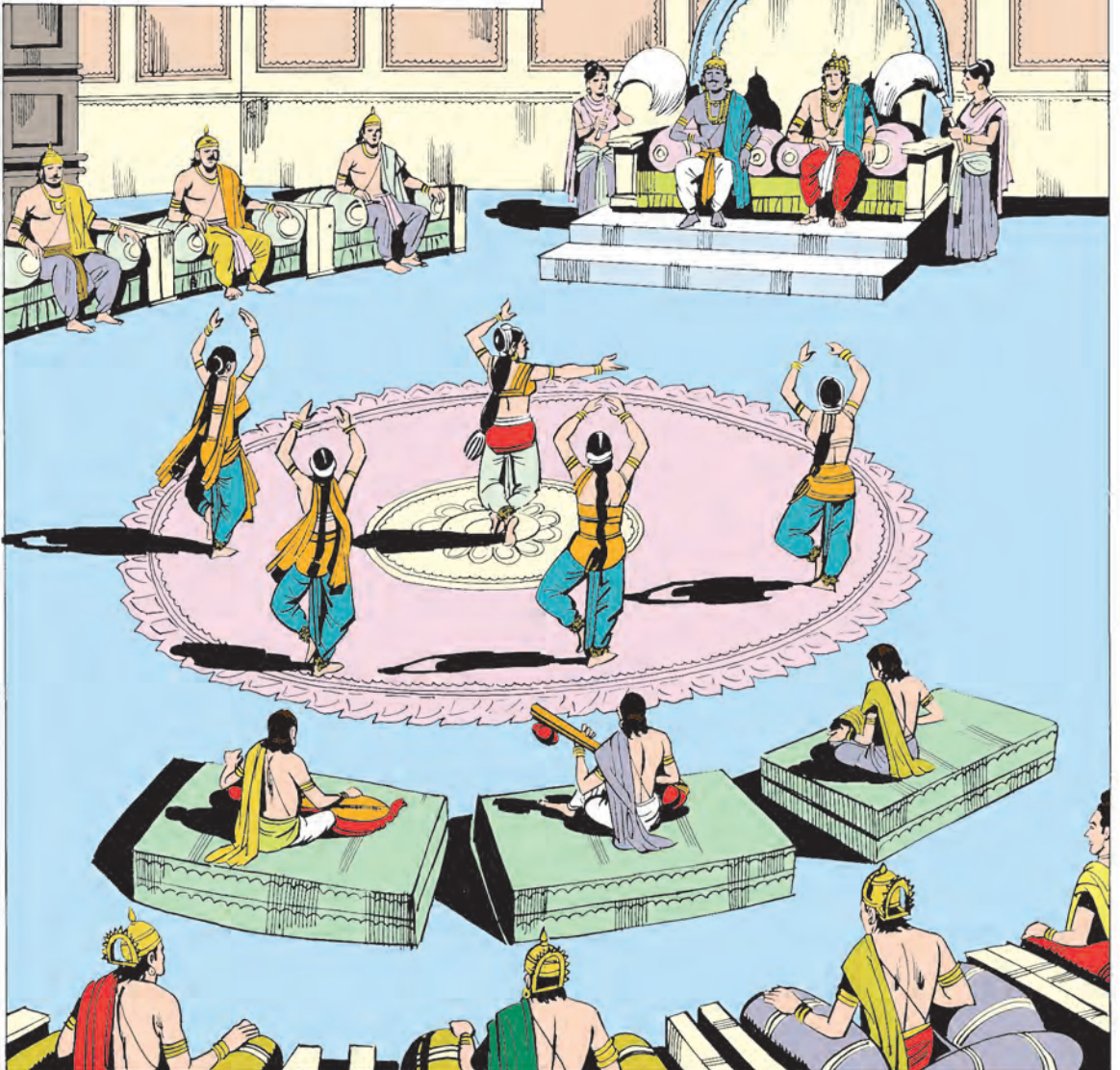
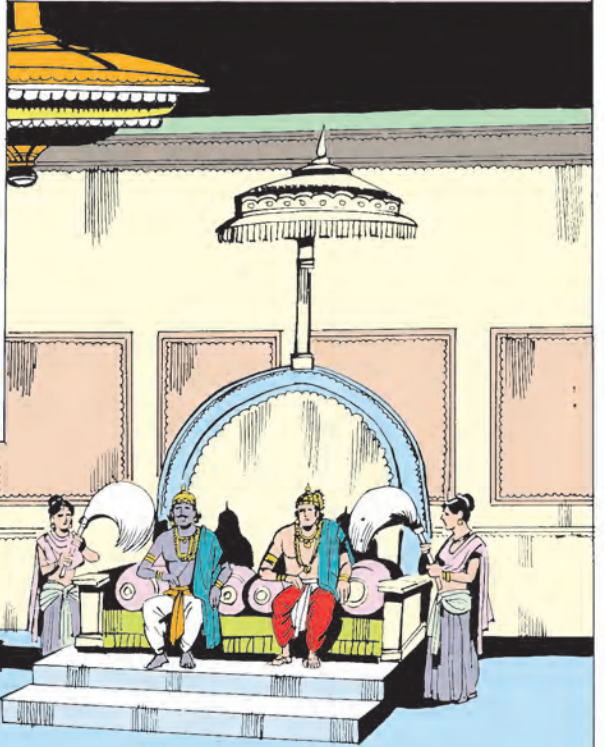
"TO THIS ASSEMBLY CAME THE RUDRAS, ADITYAS, ASHWINS, THE SAGES, YAKSHAS AND THE GREAT NAGAS."



"THE ILLUSTRIOUS MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY THEN TOOK THEIR SEATS ACCORDING TO THEIR RANK AND STATUS."



"THEN THE GANDHARVAS BEGAN TO PLUCK THE STRINGS OF THEIR VEENAS AND SING CHARMING SONGS OF CELESTIAL MELODY. THE APSARAS BEGAN TO DANCE."

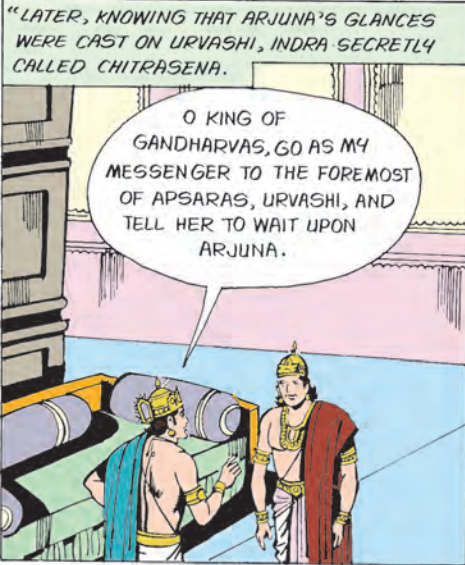


"ARJUNA LOOKED AT URVASHI * AND HIS EYES LINGERED LONG ON HER BEAUTY."

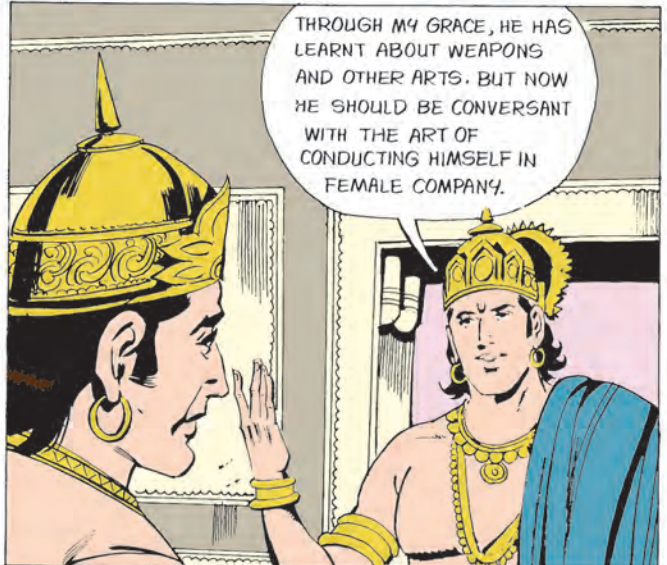


"LATER, KNOWING THAT ARJUNA'S GLANCES WERE CAST ON URVASHI, INDRA SECRETLY CALLED CHITRASENA."

O KING OF GANDHARVAS, GO AS MY MESSENGER TO THE FOREMOST OF APSARAS, URVASHI, AND TELL HER TO WAIT UPON ARJUNA.



THROUGH MY GRACE, HE HAS LEARNT ABOUT WEAPONS AND OTHER ARTS. BUT NOW HE SHOULD BE CONVERSANT WITH THE ART OF CONDUCTING HIMSELF IN FEMALE COMPANY.



"THUS TOLD BY INDRA, CHITRASENA WENT TO MEET URVASHI."

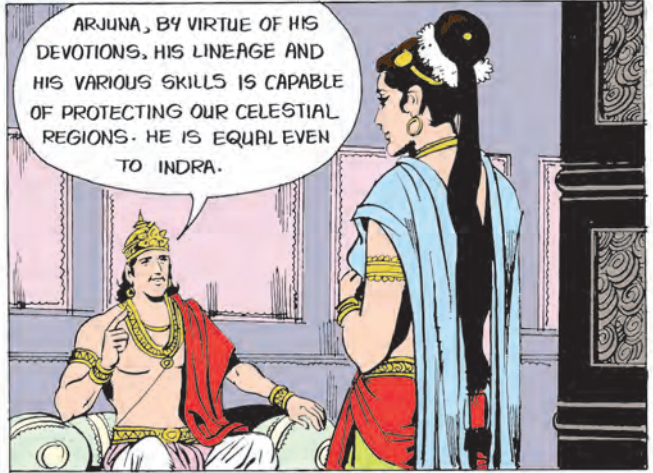
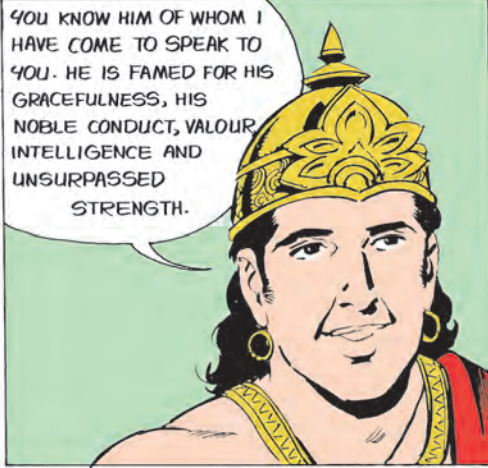


"SEATED AT EASE, CHITRASENA THEN ADDRESSED HER —

O FAIR MAIDEN, I HAVE COME WITH A MESSAGE FROM THE GREAT LORD INDRA.

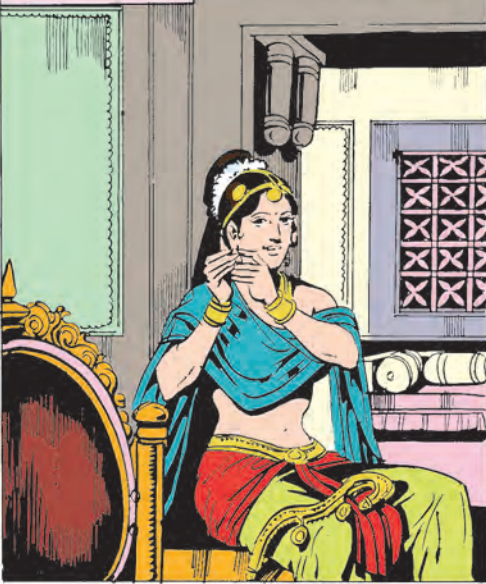


* A CELESTIAL MAIDEN.



* THE GOD OF LOVE.

"SHE ADORNED HER LONG HAIR WITH BUNCHES OF FLOWERS..."



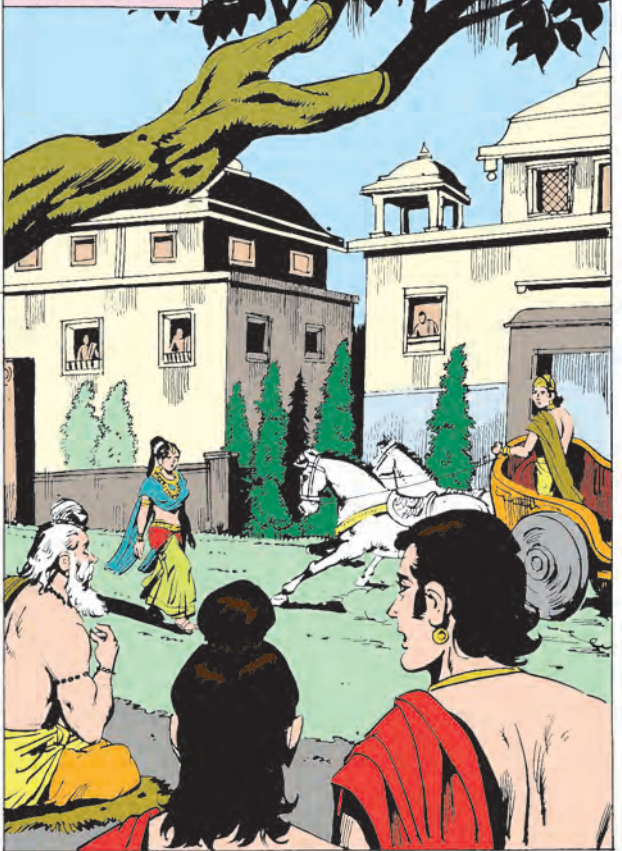
"...DECKED HERSELF WITH NECKLACES OF GOLD..."



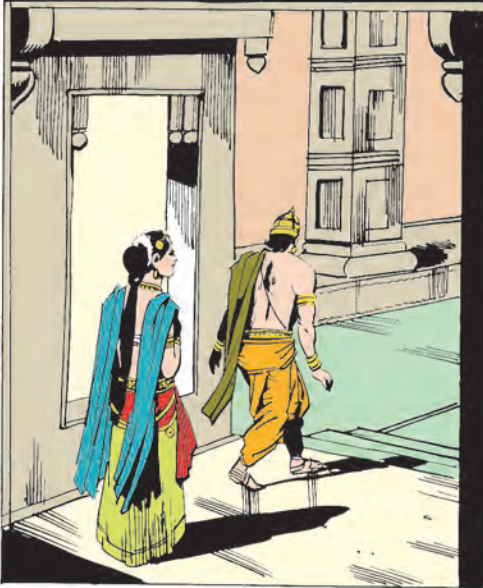
"...AND SET OUT FOR THE PALACE OF INDRA. IN THE TWILIGHT, HER BEAUTIFUL FACE SEEMED TO MOCK AT THE MOON."



"AND THOUGH THE HEAVEN ABOUNDED IN MANY WONDERFUL OBJECTS, YET WHEN URVASHI WALKED ALONG TO ARJUNA'S PALACE, THE SIDDHAS AND CHARANAS WATCHED HER BEAUTY IN AWE."



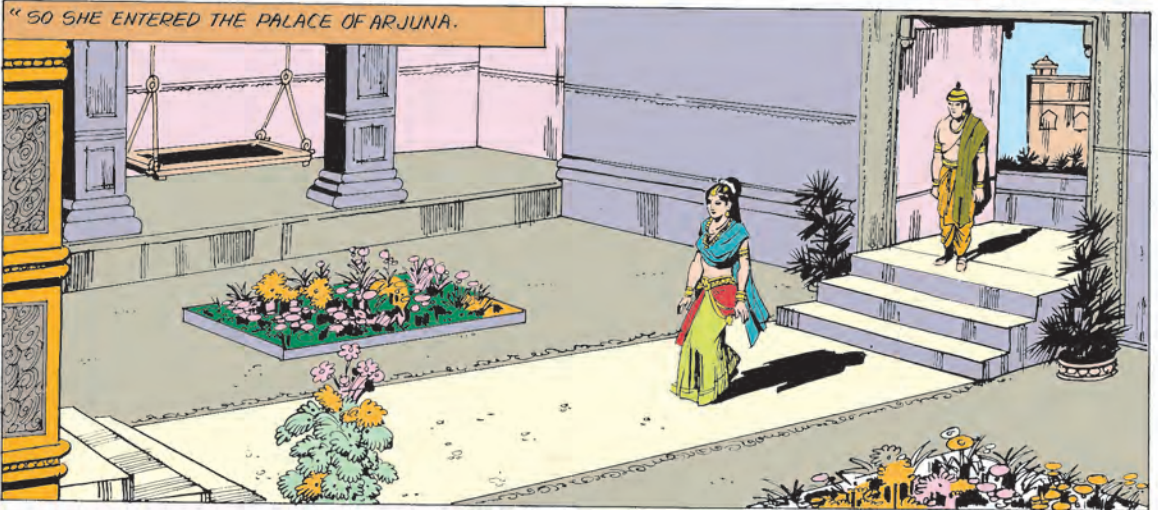
"AT THE GATE OF ARJUNA'S ABODE, SHE SENT WORD TO HIM THROUGH THE ATTENDANT."



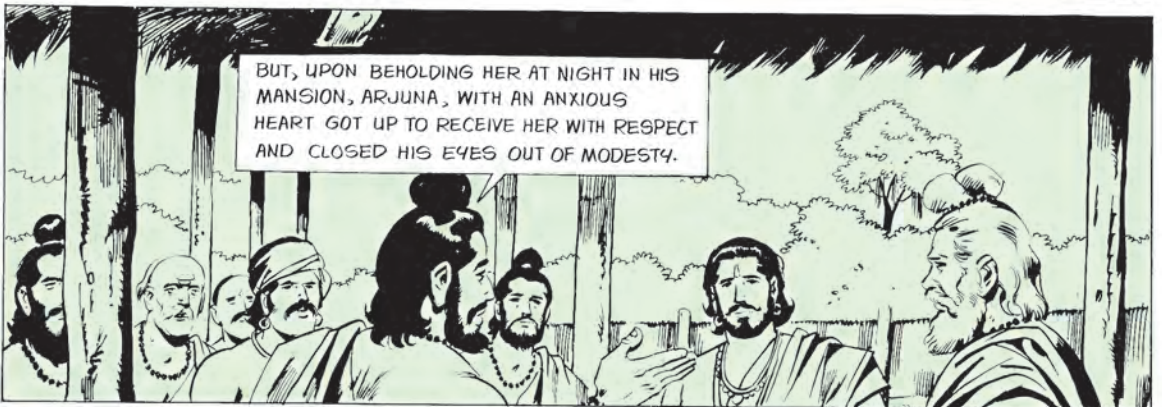
"WHEN THE ATTENDANT RETURNED —"



"SO SHE ENTERED THE PALACE OF ARJUNA."



BUT, UPON BEHOLDING HER AT NIGHT IN HIS MANSION, ARJUNA, WITH AN ANXIOUS HEART GOT UP TO RECEIVE HER WITH RESPECT AND CLOSED HIS EYES OUT OF MODESTY.



"ARJUNA SALUTED HER IN THE MANNER AN ELDER IS SALUTED AND OFFERED HER WORSHIP.

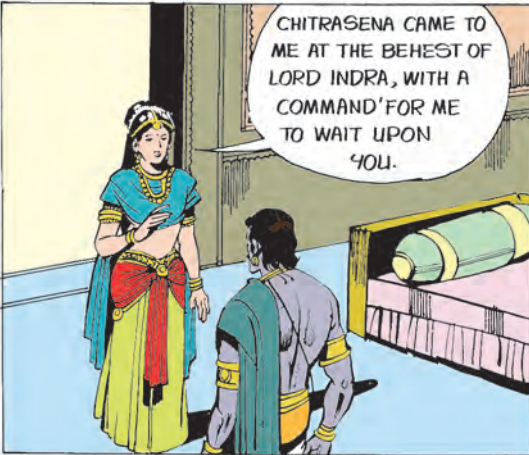


O FOREMOST OF APSARAS, I BOW TO YOU IN REVERENCE. COMMAND ME AND I SHALL WAIT UPON YOU AS A SERVANT.

HEARING ARJUNA SPEAKING THUS, O MONARCH, URVASHI FLEW INTO A RAGE. SHE THEN EXPLAINED TO HIM WHAT HAD TRANSPIRED BETWEEN HER AND CHITRASENA.



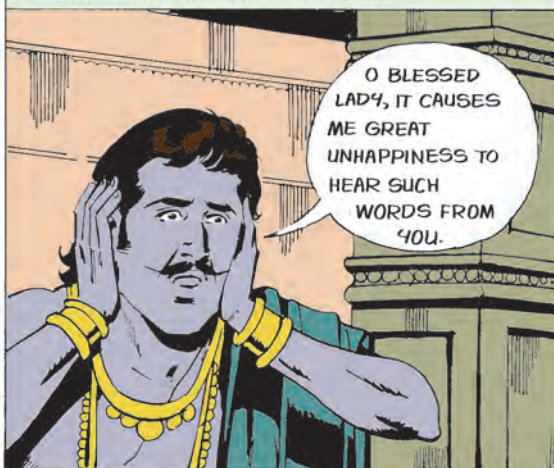
CHITRASENA CAME TO ME AT THE BEHEST OF LORD INDRA, WITH A COMMAND FOR ME TO WAIT UPON YOU.



THUS COMMANDED BY YOUR FATHER AND IMPELLED BY KAMADEVA I WISH TO SERVE YOU.

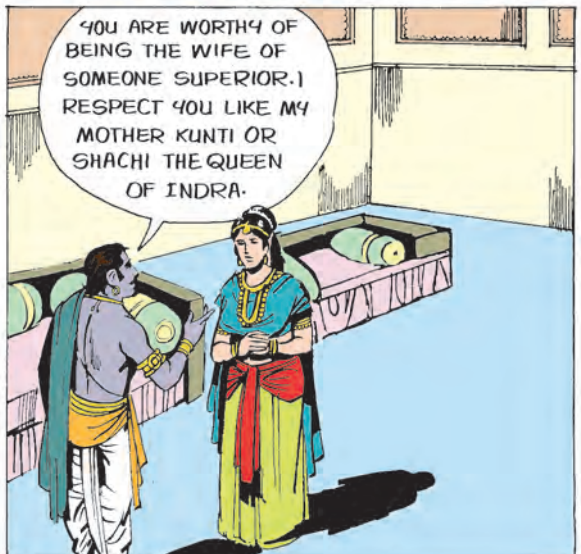


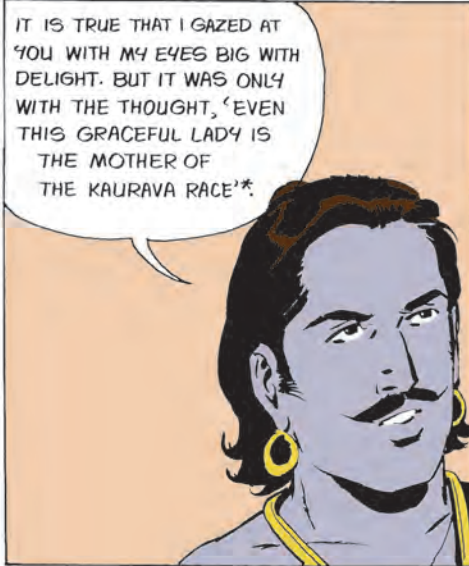
"HEARING HER SPEAK IN THIS MANNER, ARJUNA WAS OVERCOME WITH EMBARRASSMENT. SHUTTING HIS EARS WITH HIS HANDS HE SAID —



O BLESSED LADY, IT CAUSES ME GREAT UNHAPPINESS TO HEAR SUCH WORDS FROM YOU.

YOU ARE WORTHY OF BEING THE WIFE OF SOMEONE SUPERIOR. I RESPECT YOU LIKE MY MOTHER KUNTI OR SHACHI THE QUEEN OF INDRA.





* URVASHI WAS THE WIFE OF PURURAVA, AN ANCESTOR OF THE KAURAVAS

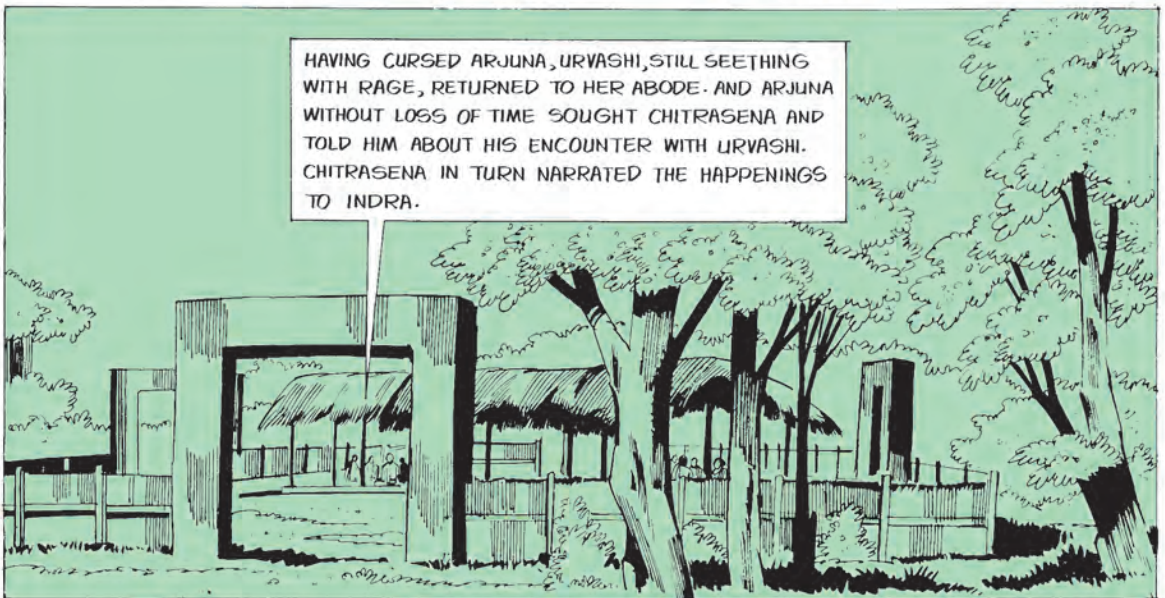
"THUS ADDRESSED, URVASHI TREMBLED WITH RAGE AND CONTRACTING HER BROWS, SHE CURSED ARJUNA SAYING—

SINCE YOU HAVE
SCORNE A WOMAN WHO
CAME TO YOUR MANSION
AT THE COMMAND OF YOUR
FATHER AND OF HER OWN
FREE WILL, I CURSE
YOU...

...YOU SHALL
HAVE TO BIDE YOUR
TIME AMONG WOMEN,
UNRESPECTED AND AS A
DANCER. YOU SHALL BE
REGARDED AS ONE
DESTITUTE OF MANLINESS
AND DISDAINED AS
A EUNUCH.

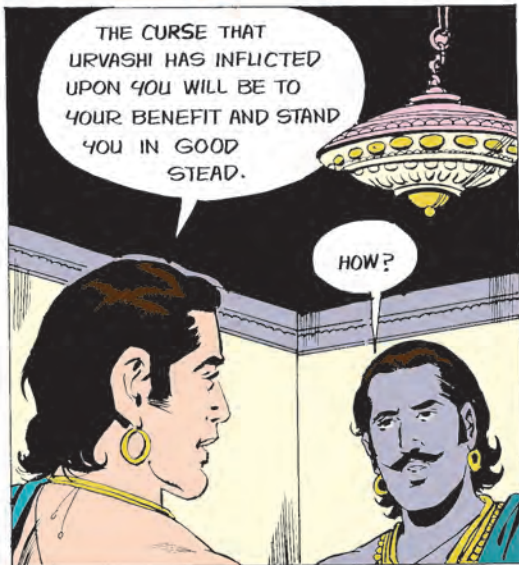


HAVING CURSED ARJUNA, URVASHI, STILL SEETHING WITH RAGE, RETURNED TO HER ABODE. AND ARJUNA WITHOUT LOSS OF TIME SOUGHT CHITRASENA AND TOLD HIM ABOUT HIS ENCOUNTER WITH URVASHI. CHITRASENA IN TURN NARRATED THE HAPPENINGS TO INDRA.



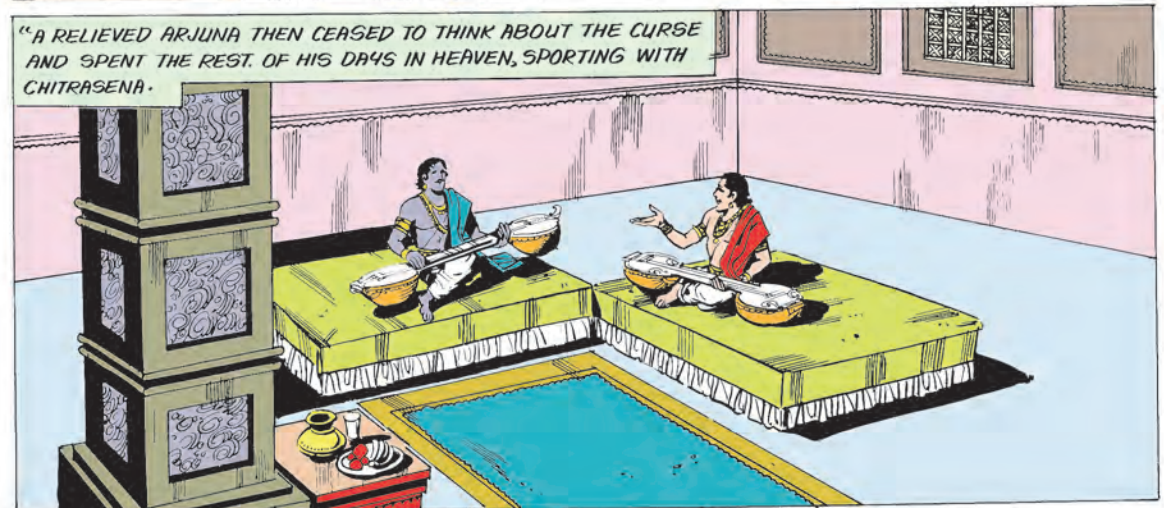
"INDRA THEN CALLED FOR HIS SON IN PRIVATE AND SMILINGLY CONSOLED HIM.

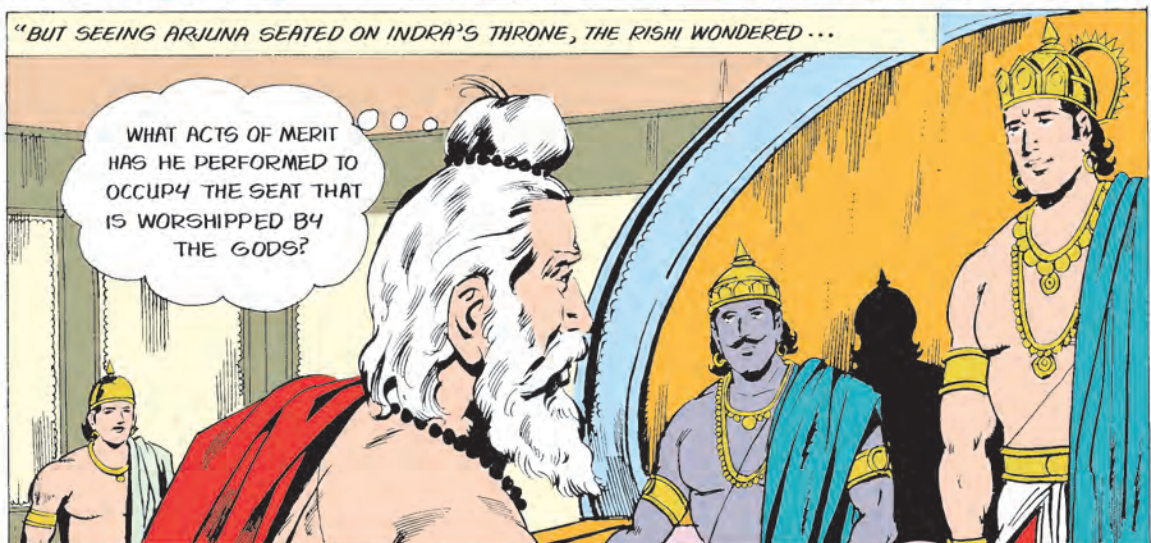
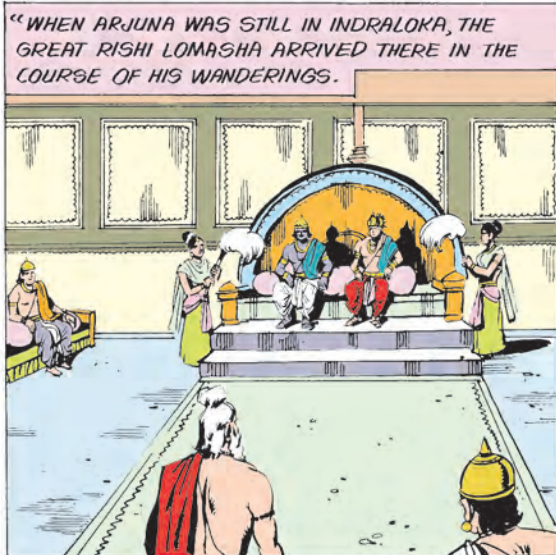
MY MIGHTY SON,
YOU HAVE SURPASSED
EVEN GREAT RISHIS BY
THE PATIENCE AND
SELF-CONTROL YOU
HAVE SHOWN.



YOU HAVE TO PASS
THE THIRTEENTH YEAR
OF YOUR EXILE INCOGNITO.
THAT IS THE TIME WHEN
THE SPELL CAST ON YOU
BY URVASHI WILL WORK.
AT THE END OF THAT YEAR
YOU WILL REGAIN YOUR
MANHOOD.

"A RELIEVED ARJUNA THEN CEASED TO THINK ABOUT THE CURSE
AND SPENT THE REST OF HIS DAYS IN HEAVEN, SPORTING WITH
CHITRASENA.



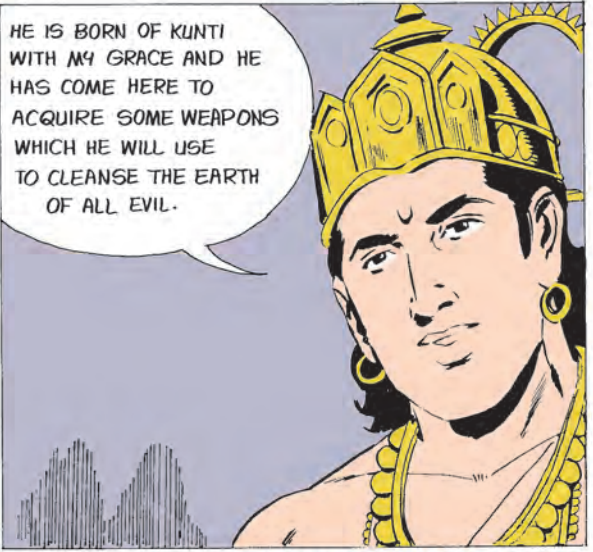


"LORD INDRA PERCEIVED THE THOUGHTS OF LOMASHA AND SAID:

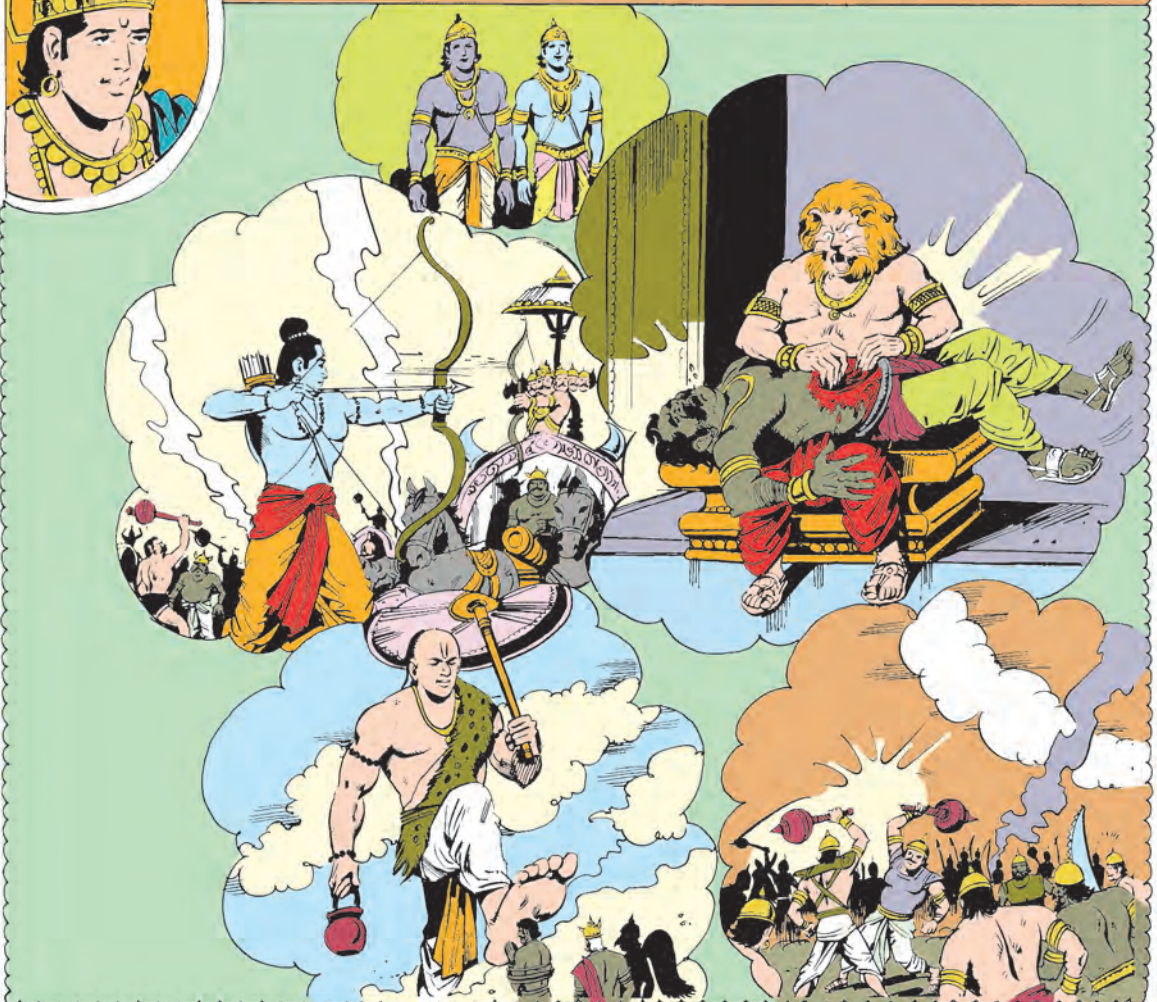
O BRAHMARSHI,
ARJUNA IS NO MORTAL,
THOUGH HE HAS BEEN
BORN AMONG MEN.



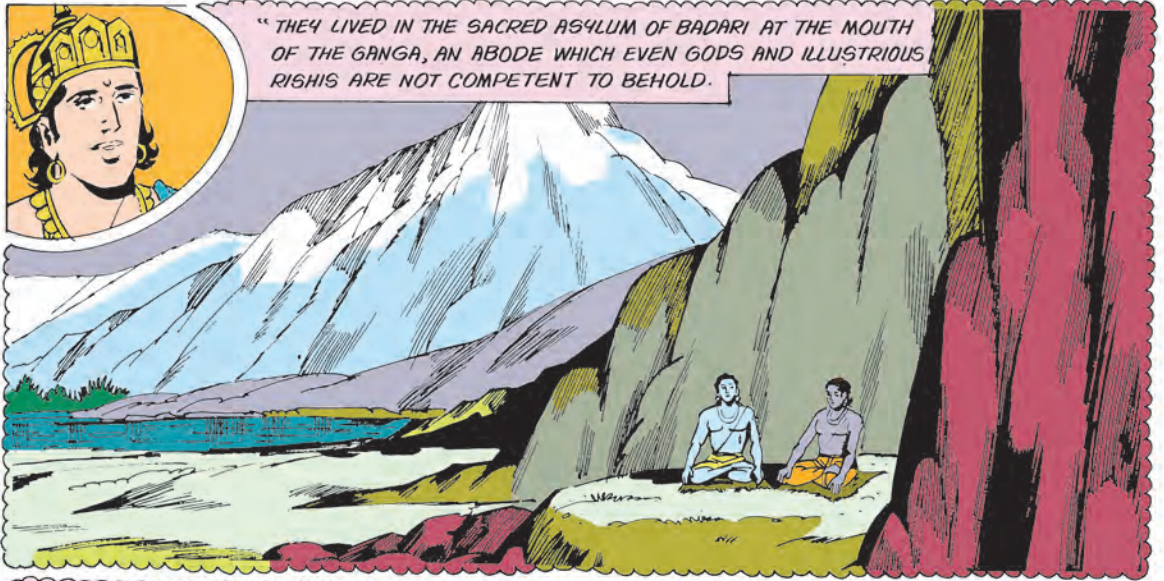
HE IS BORN OF KUNTI
WITH MY GRACE AND HE
HAS COME HERE TO
ACQUIRE SOME WEAPONS
WHICH HE WILL USE
TO CLEANSE THE EARTH
OF ALL EVIL.



"BRAHMANA, ARJUNA AND KRISHNA ARE NONE OTHER THAN NARA AND NARAYANA* WHO HAVE BEEN BORN ON EARTH TO ENSURE THE PREVALENCE OF DHARMA.



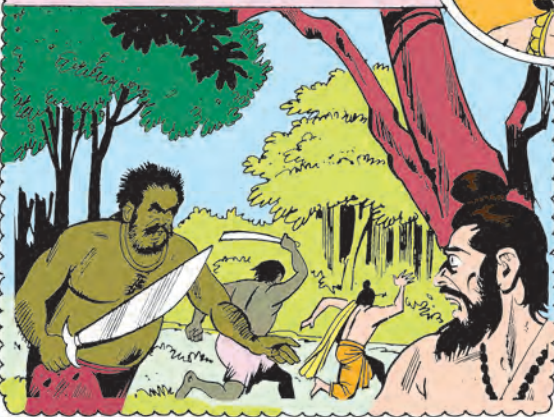
* NARA AND NARAYANA WERE GREAT SAGES WHO HAD BEEN BORN ON EARTH TO ACCOMPLISH THE TASK OF THE GODS.



"THESE RISHIS AT MY BEHEST HAVE BEEN BORN ON EARTH TO RID HER OF ALL SIN, AND EXTERMINATE THE ASURAS* WHO LIVE IN THE NETHER WORLD."



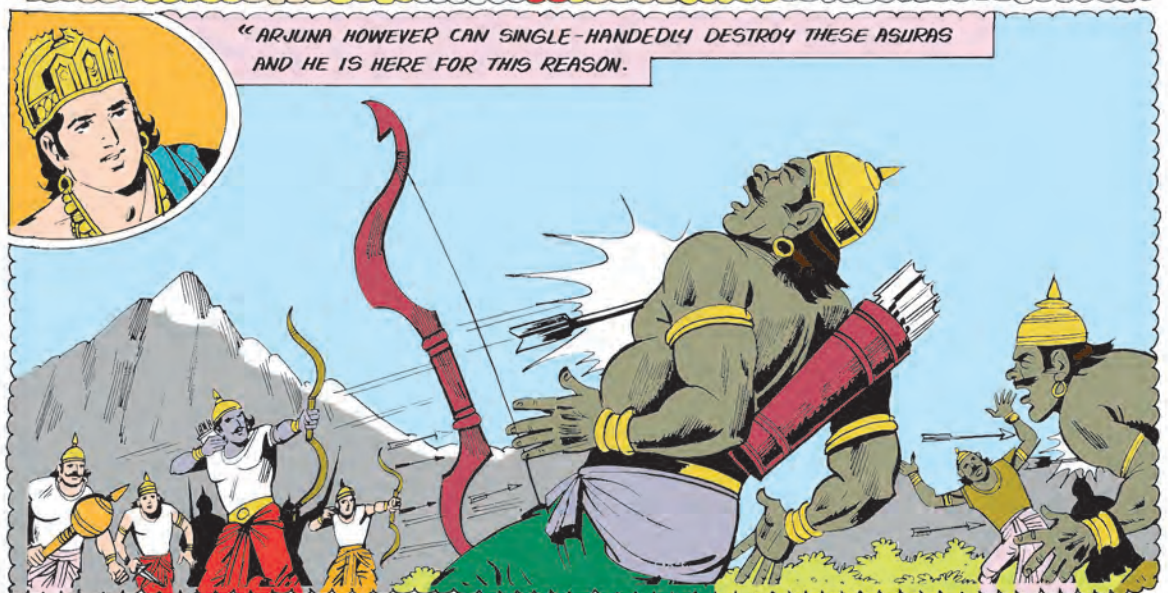
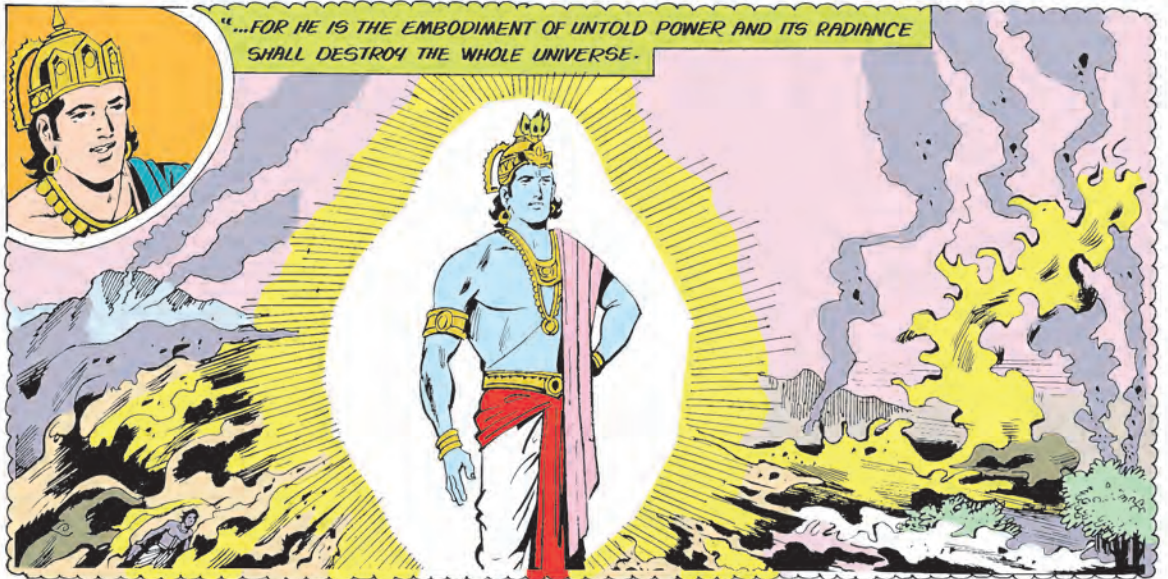
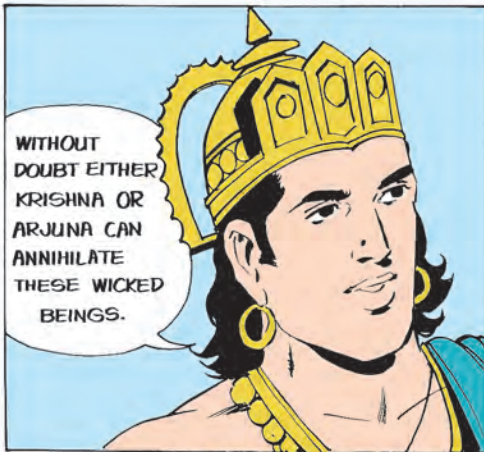
"THESE ASURAS, STRENGTHENED BY BOONS, HAVE BECOME INVINCIBLE TO THE CELESTIALS..."

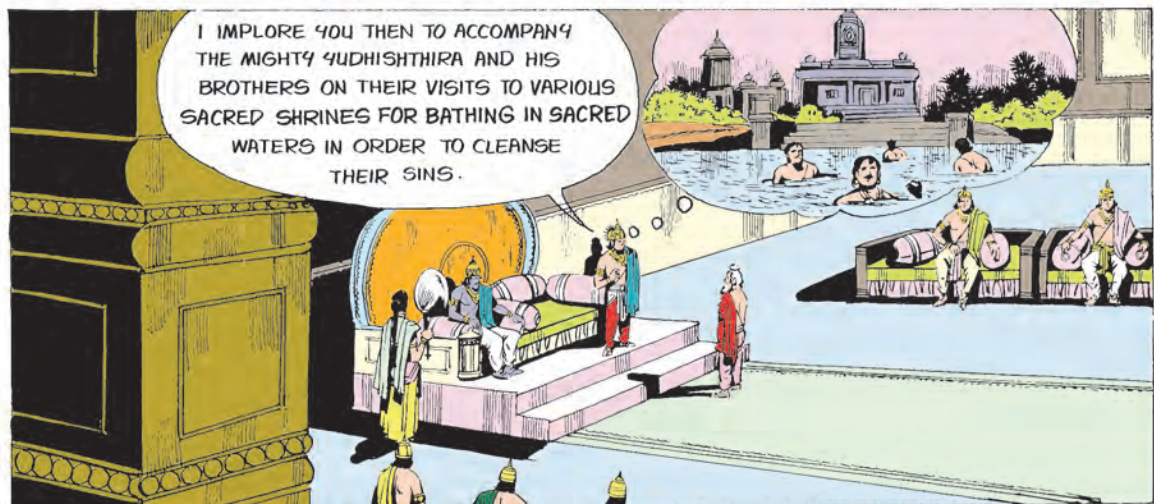
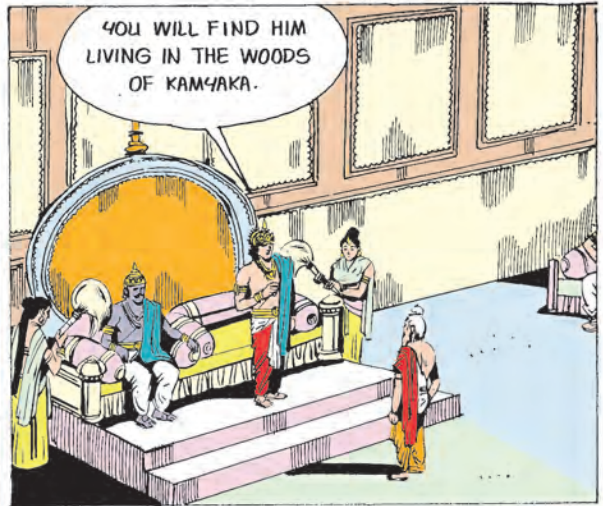
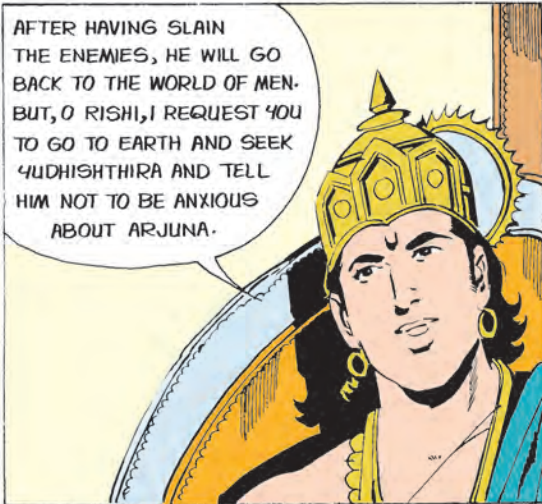


"...AND ARE CAUSING US GREAT HARM."



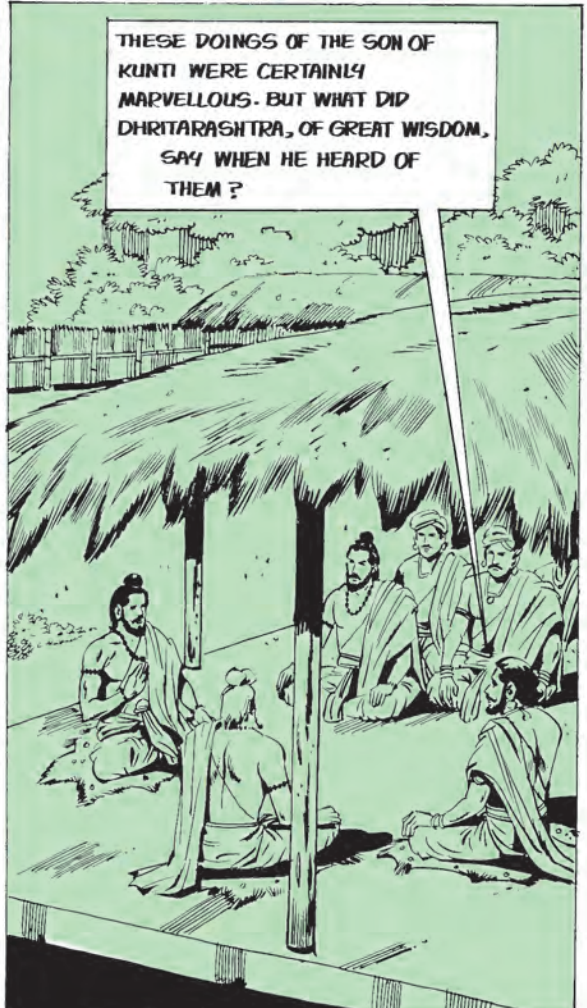
* DEMONS







"AFTER INDRA HAD FINISHED ADDRESSING LOMASHA, ARJUNA REVERENTLY SAID TO THE RISHI-



"KING DHRITARASHTRA, HEARING OF ARJUNA'S VISIT TO INDRALOKA, SAID TO SANJAYA:

MY WRETCHED SON, DURYODHANA IS INDULGING IN WORLDLY PLEASURES. HIS THOUGHTS ARE SINFUL.



THE HEEDLESS FOOL WILL CERTAINLY DESTROY THE WHOLE WORLD.

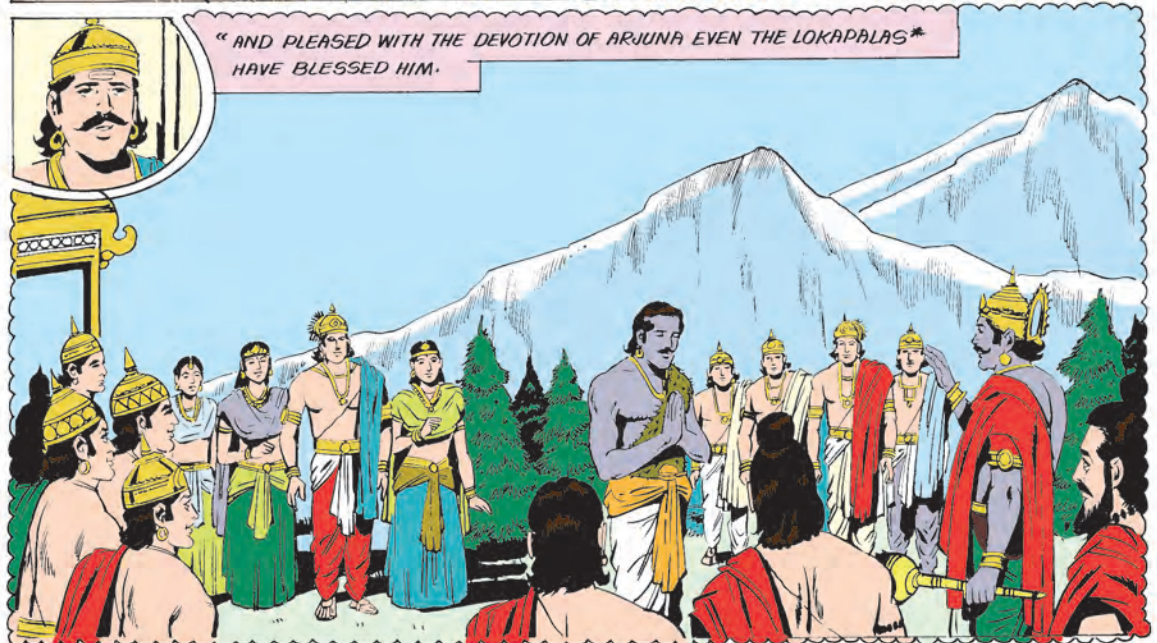
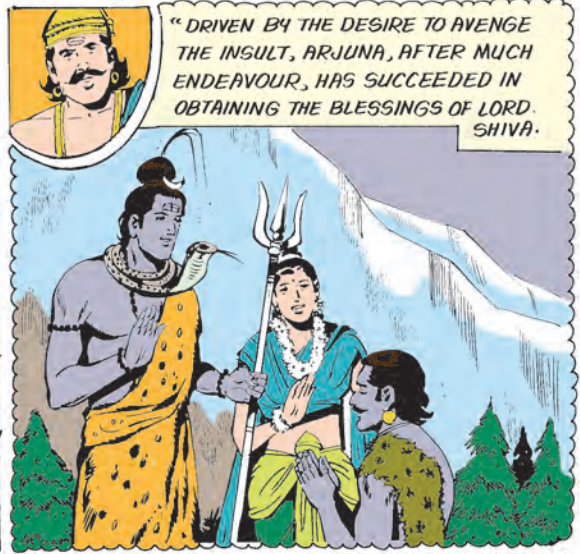
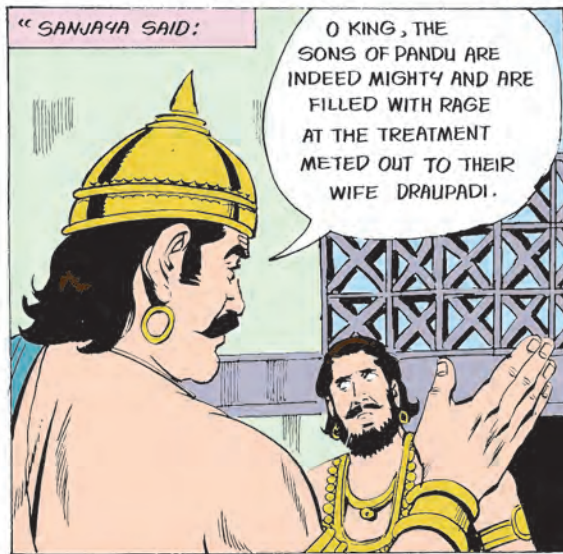
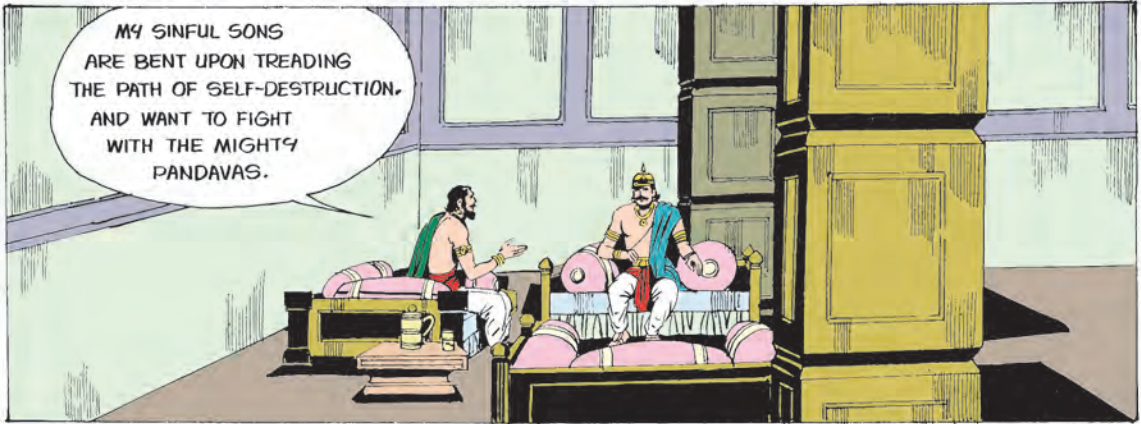


ON THE OTHER HAND, YUDHISHTHIRA, WHO SPEAKS THE TRUTH EVEN IN JEST AND HAS A SUPREME WARRIOR LIKE ARJUNA ON HIS SIDE, WILL CERTAINLY CONQUER THE THREE WORLDS.



EVEN THE MIGHT AND VALOUR OF DRONA, BHEESHMA AND KARNA WILL BE OF NO AVAIL AGAINST THE PANDAVAS WHO HAVE MASTERED THE GREAT WEAPONS.





* A LOKAPALA IS THE GUARDIAN OF A QUARTER

"A WORRIED DHRITARASHTRA THEN SAID:

O SANJAYA, BROODING OVER THE TERRIBLE INJUSTICE DONE TO THE SONS OF PANDU DURING THE GAME OF DICE, I AM RESTLESS DAY AND NIGHT AND DO NOT HAVE A MOMENT'S PEACE.

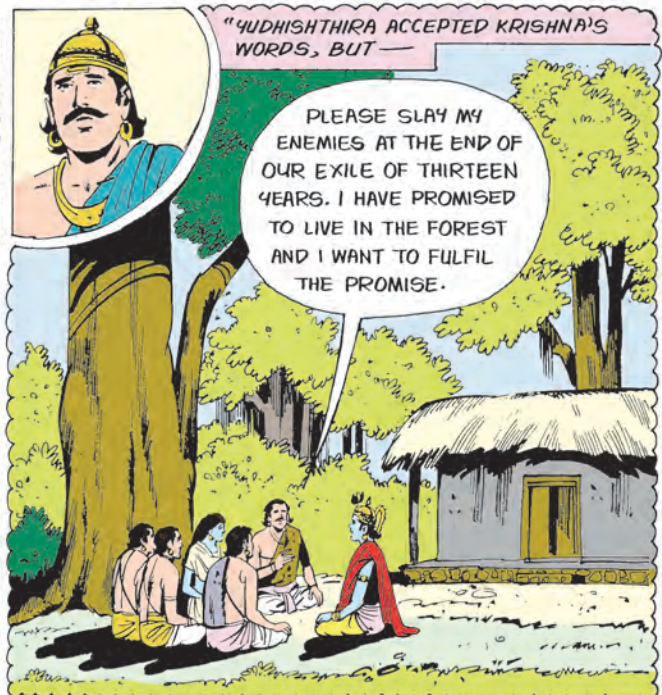
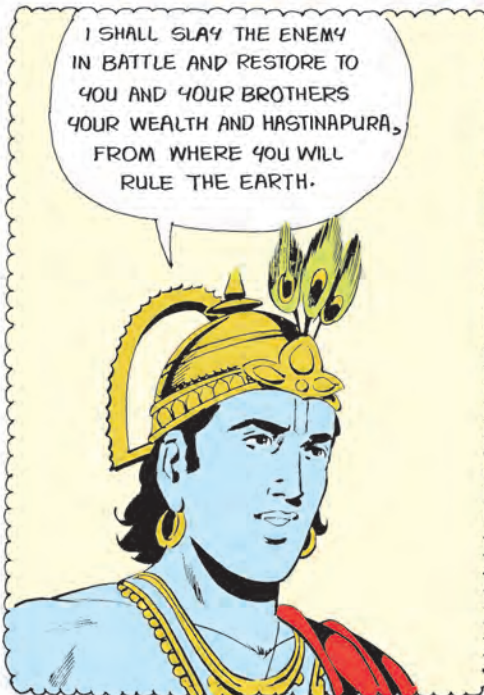
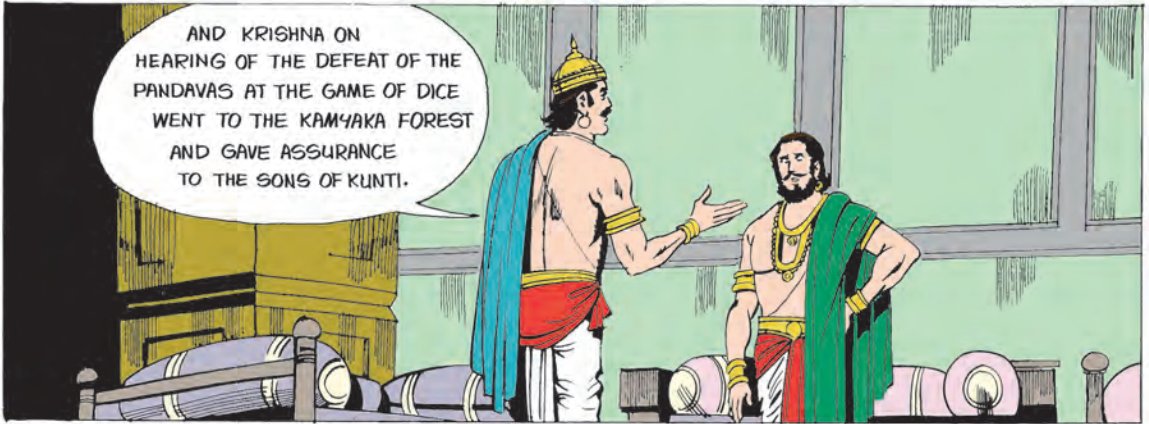
I AM CERTAIN, THE PANDAVAS LED BY INVINCIBLE KRISHNA WILL ROUT MY LEGIONS.

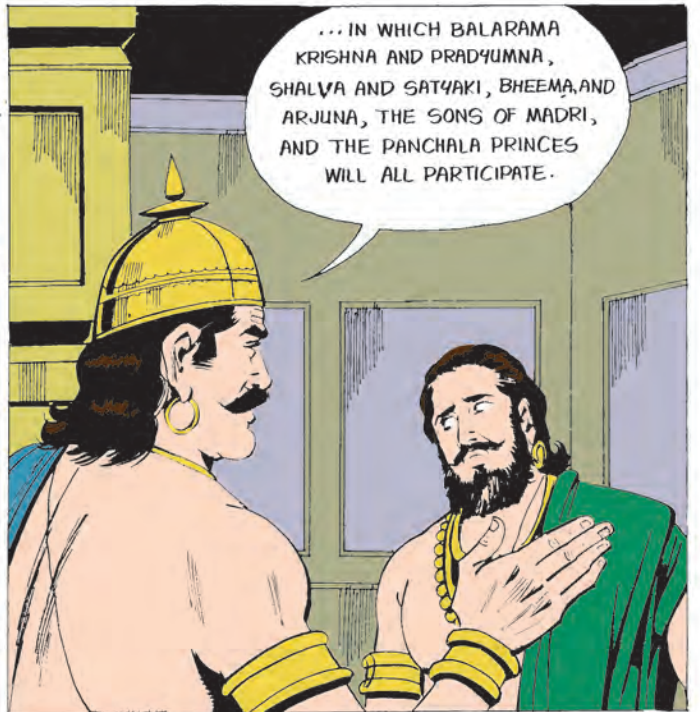
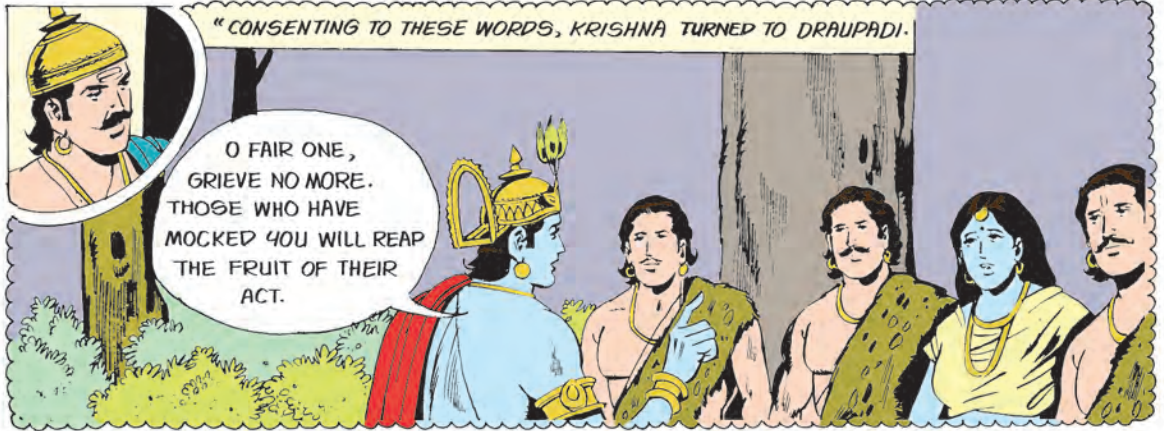
"HEARING THESE LAMENTATIONS, SANJAYA SAID:

OF UNLIMITED RADIANCE AND EQUIPPED WITH WEAPONS, THE PANDAVAS ARE INVINCIBLE EVEN TO THE GODS...

...AND I BELIEVE, WILL DESTROY YOUR SONS IN WAR.

O KING, IN SPITE OF BEING ABLE TO PREVENT THIS INJUSTICE YOU DID NOT RESTRAIN YOUR SON, OUT OF BLIND LOVE FOR HIM.





"DHRTARASHTRA THEN REMEMBERED.

AT THE TIME
OF THE GAME OF
DICE, VIDURA HAD
WARNED THAT IF THE
PANDAVAS WERE
DEFEATED AT THE
GAME...

...IT WOULD CERTAINLY
MEAN A TERRIBLE BLOOD
BATH AND INEVITABLE
DESTRUCTION.

I FEAR THAT VIDURA'S
PROPHECY IS DESTINED
TO COME TRUE. I HAVE NO
DOUBT THAT AT THE END
OF THE EXILE THE
PANDAVAS WILL WAGE
RELENTLESS WAR.

"THUS ENDS THE TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF OUR RENDERING
OF VAISHAMPAYANA'S IMMORTAL ITIHASA—'THE MAHABHARATA.'"

Mahabharata - 22

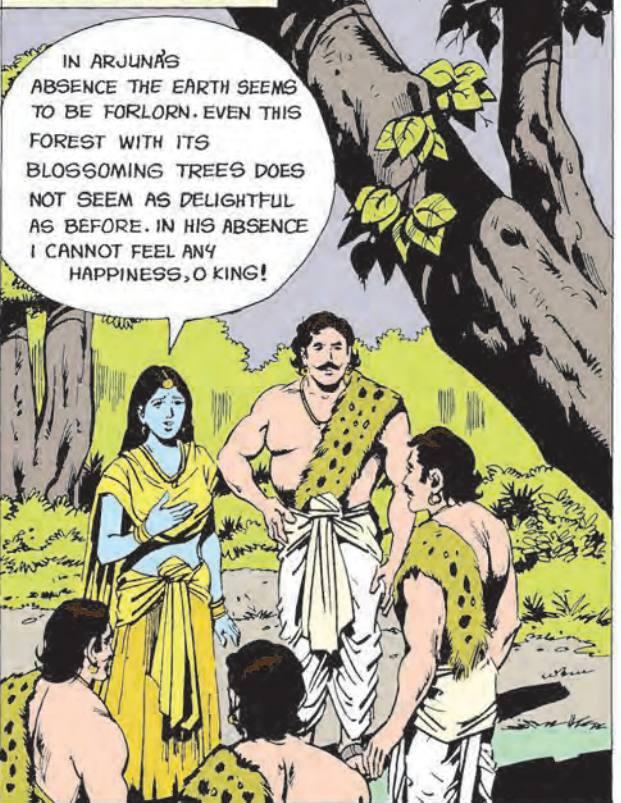
THE REUNION



"THEY CONTINUED TO LIVE IN THE KAMPAKA FOREST IN PROFOUND MELANCHOLY.



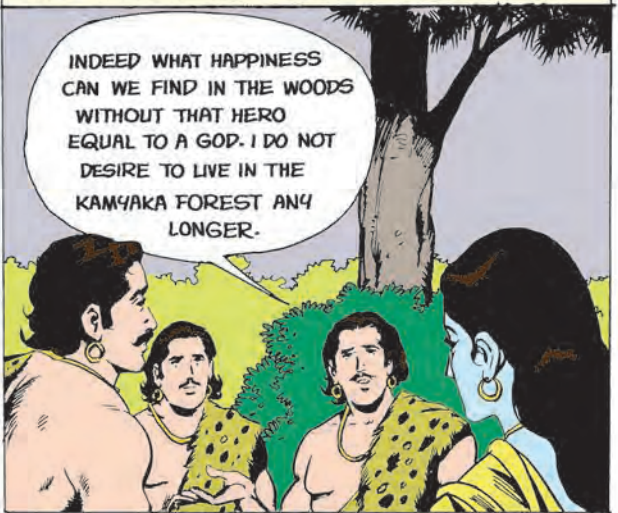
"DRAUPADI REMEMBERING ARJUNA, ONE DAY ADDRESSED YUDHISHTHIRA THUS —



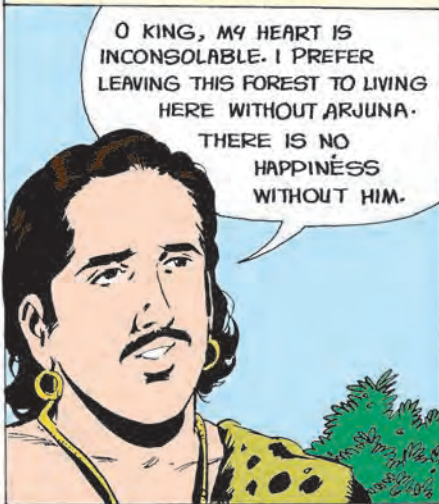
"HEARING DRAUPADI LAMENT THUS, BHEEMA SAID—



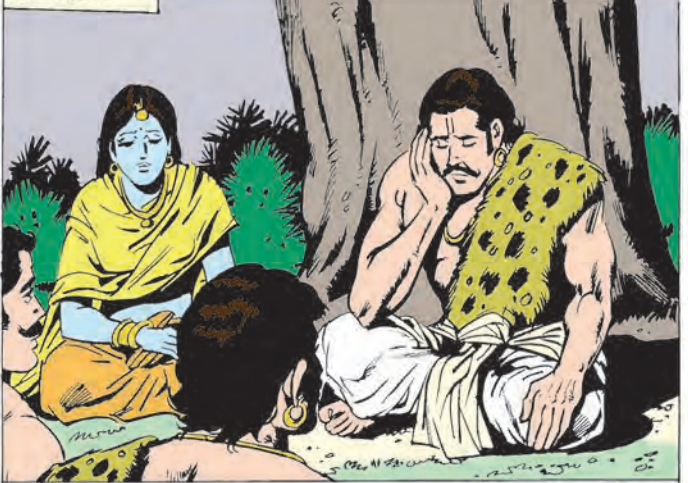
"THEN NAKULA IN A VOICE CHOKED WITH EMOTION SAID—



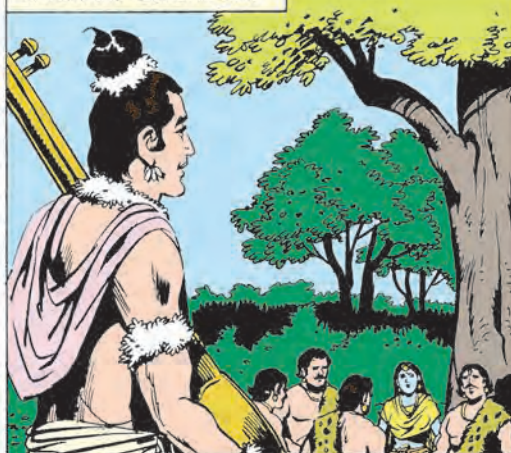
"AND SAHADEVA LAMENTED—



"HEARING THESE WORDS YUDHISHTHIRA BECAME SADDER THAN BEFORE.



"JUST THEN THE CELESTIAL RISHI NARADA APPEARED BEFORE HIM.



"BEHOLDING HIM KING YUDHISHTHIRA AND HIS BROTHERS STOOD UP AND DULY WORSHIPPED THE ILLUSTRIOUS SAGE.

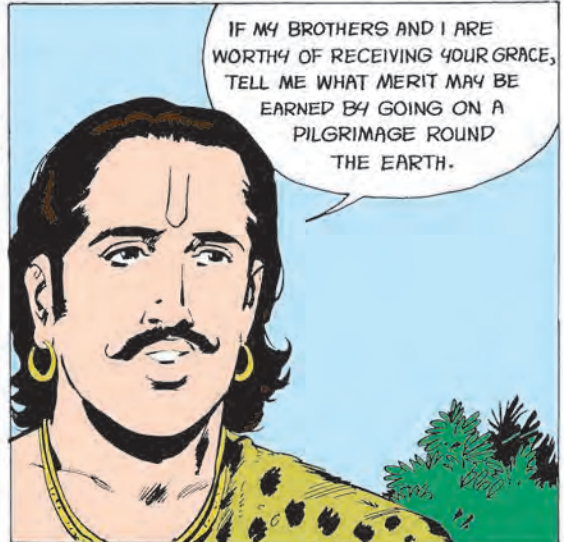


"RISHI NARADA, ACCEPTING THE WORSHIP, COMFORTED THE SONS OF PANDU. ADDRESSING UDISHTHIRA HE SAID —



TELL ME WHAT IS WORRYING YOU AND HOW I CAN HELP YOU.

IF MY BROTHERS AND I ARE WORTHY OF RECEIVING YOUR GRACE, TELL ME WHAT MERIT MAY BE EARNED BY GOING ON A PILGRIMAGE ROUND THE EARTH.

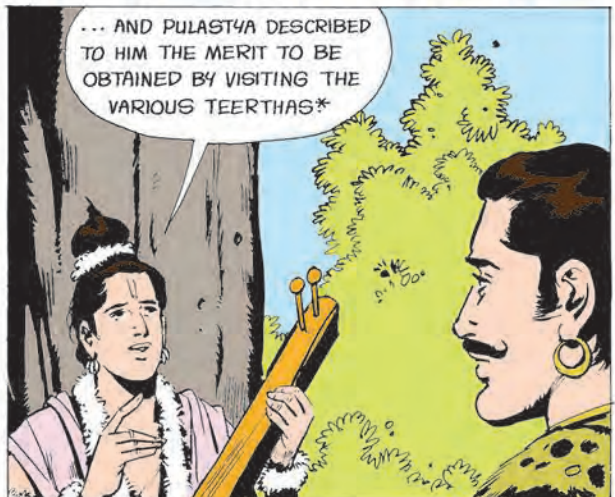


"THEN NARADA SAID —

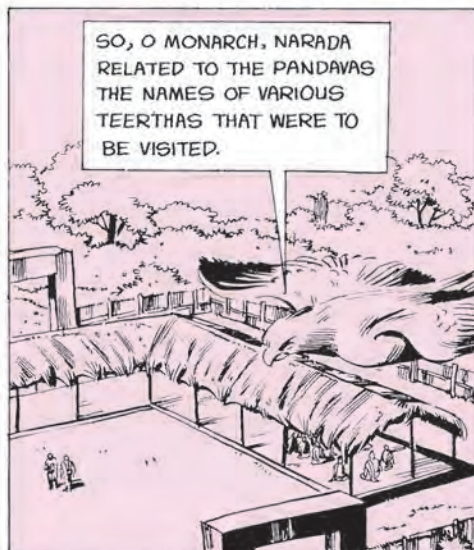


O KING, THE WISE BHEESHMA ONCE PUT THE SAME QUERY TO THE GREAT RISHI PULASTHA, WHO HAD APPEARED BEFORE HIM...

... AND PULASTHA DESCRIBED TO HIM THE MERIT TO BE OBTAINED BY VISITING THE VARIOUS TEERTHAS*

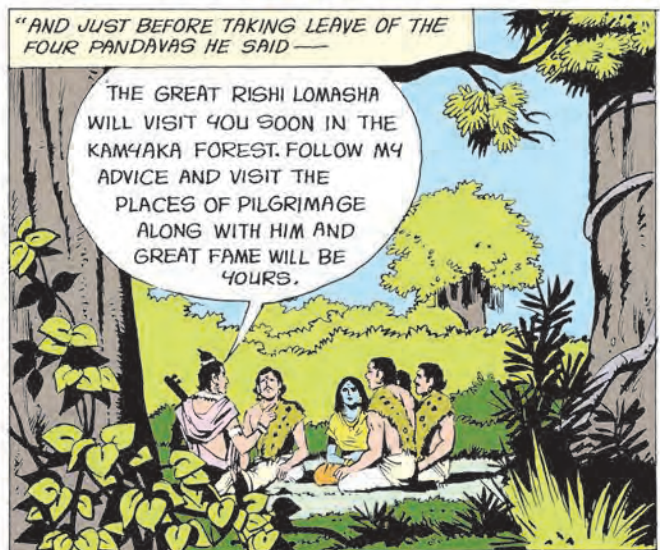


SO, O MONARCH, NARADA RELATED TO THE PANDAVAS THE NAMES OF VARIOUS TEERTHAS THAT WERE TO BE VISITED.



"AND JUST BEFORE TAKING LEAVE OF THE FOUR PANDAVAS HE SAID —

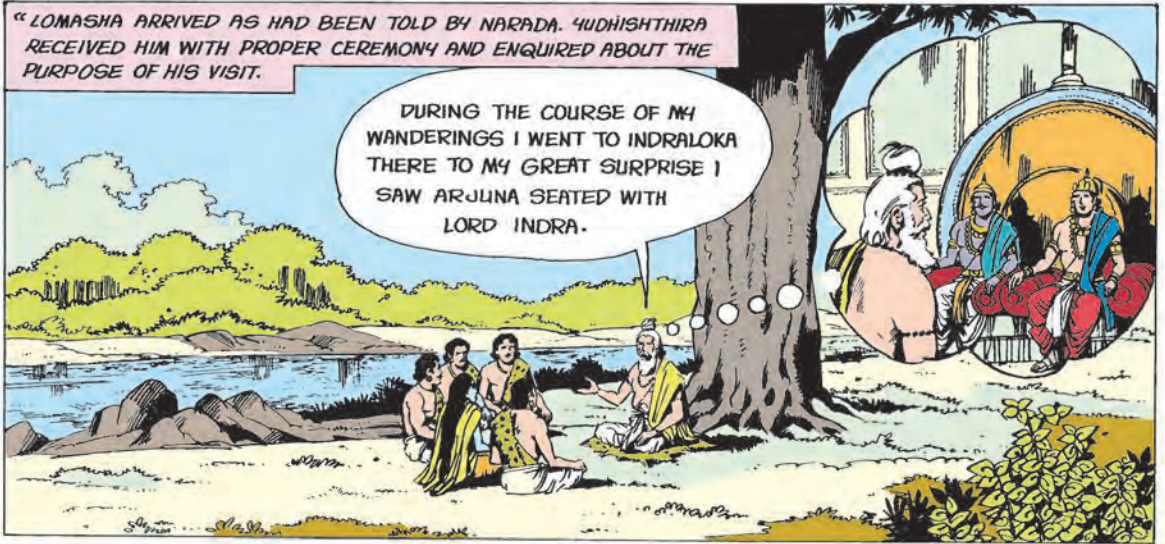
THE GREAT RISHI LOMASHA WILL VISIT YOU SOON IN THE KAMYAKA FOREST. FOLLOW MY ADVICE AND VISIT THE PLACES OF PILGRIMAGE ALONG WITH HIM AND GREAT FAME WILL BE YOURS.



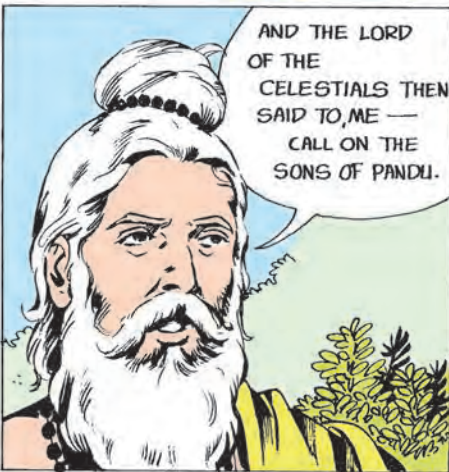
* PLACES OF PILGRIMAGE

"LOMASHA ARRIVED AS HAD BEEN TOLD BY NARADA. YUDHISHTHIRA RECEIVED HIM WITH PROPER CEREMONY AND ENQUIRED ABOUT THE PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT.

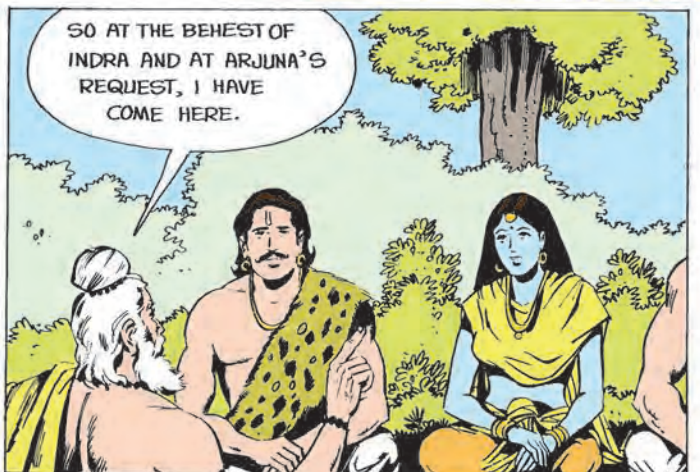
DURING THE COURSE OF MY WANDERINGS I WENT TO INDRALOKA THERE TO MY GREAT SURPRISE I SAW ARJUNA SEATED WITH LORD INDRA.



AND THE LORD OF THE CELESTIALS THEN SAID TO ME — CALL ON THE SONS OF PANDU.



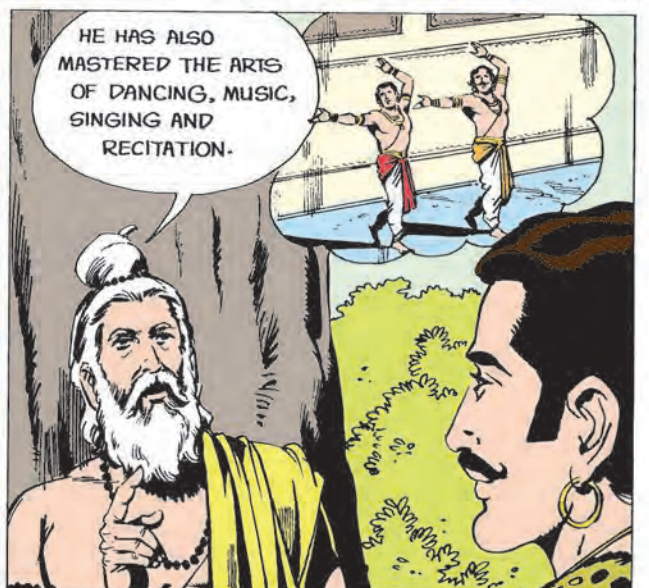
SO AT THE BEHEST OF INDRA AND AT ARJUNA'S REQUEST, I HAVE COME HERE.

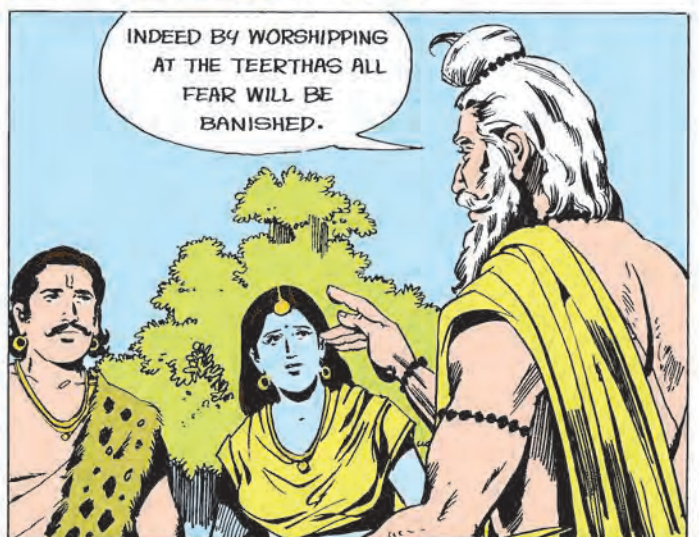
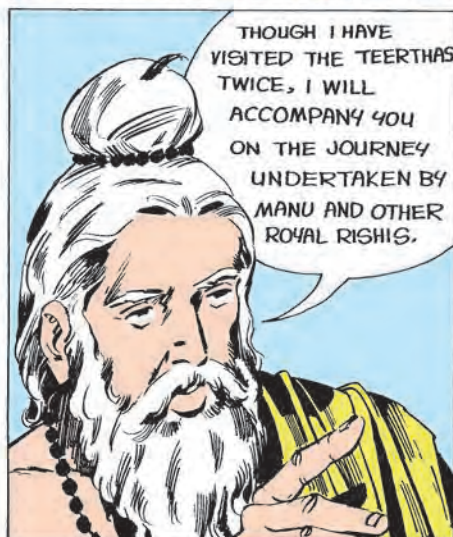
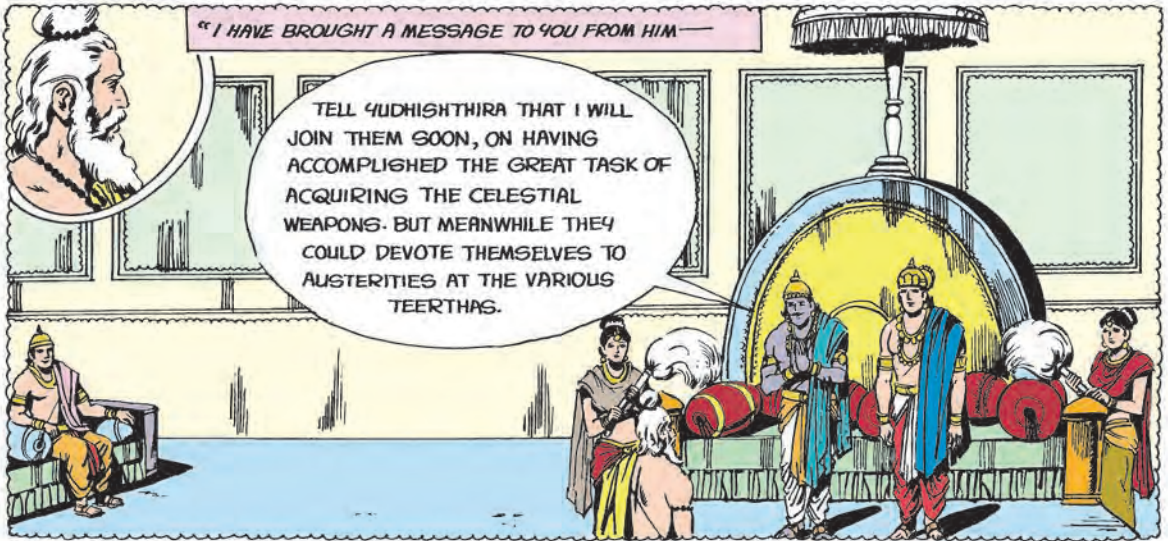


O YUDHISHTHIRA, ARJUNA HAS ACQUIRED CELESTIAL WEAPONS.



HE HAS ALSO MASTERED THE ARTS OF DANCING, MUSIC, SINGING AND RECITATION.







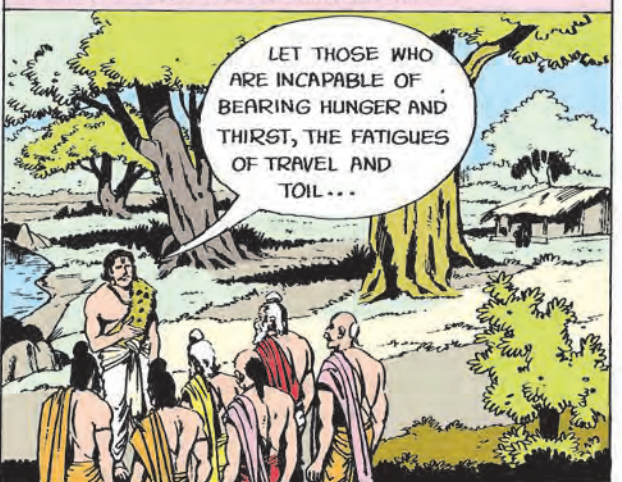
"AN OVERWHELMED AND DELIGHTED YUDHISHTHIRA REPLIED—

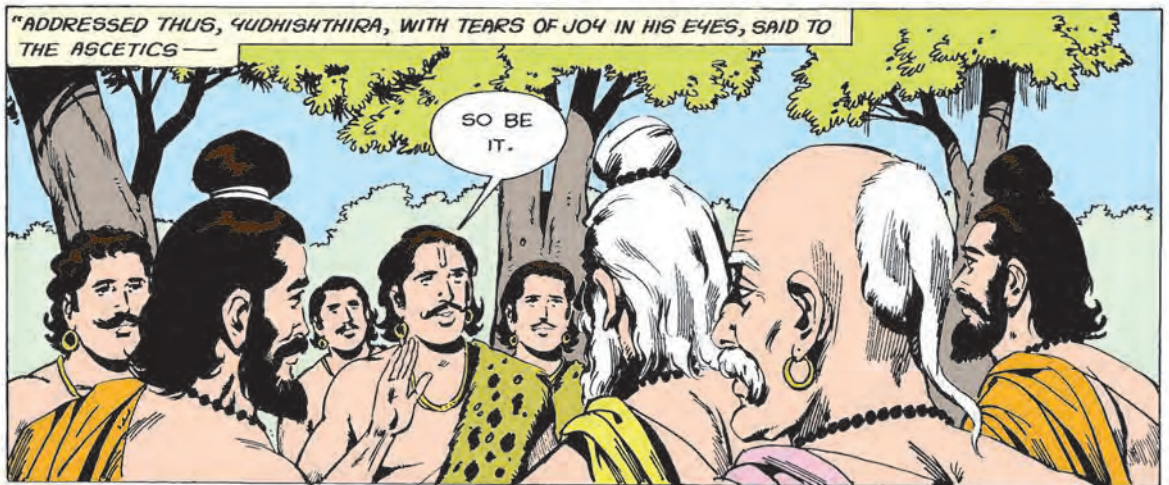
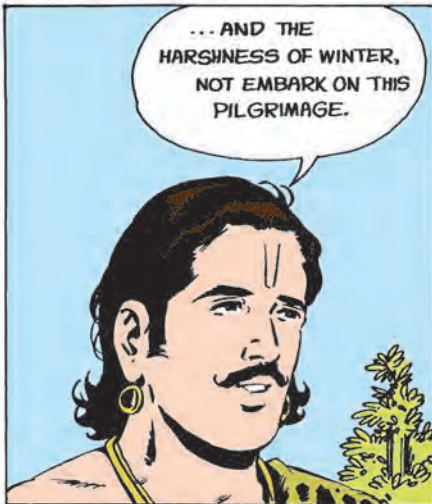


"BUT THEN LOMASHA SAID—



"SO YUDHISHTHIRA ADDRESSED THE BRAHMANAS AND MENDICANTS WHO HAD ACCOMPANIED HIM—





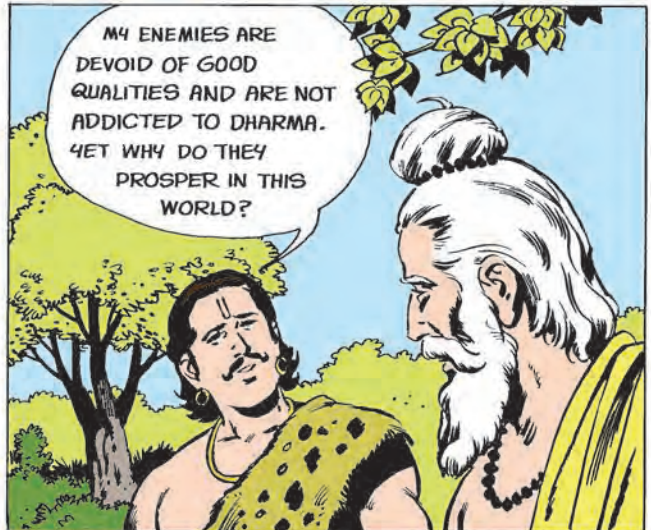
"SO, ON A MORNING FOLLOWING A FULL MOON NIGHT, THE PANDAVAS ACCOMPANIED BY LOMASHA, DHAUMYA AND OTHER ASCETICS, SET OUT TOWARDS THE EAST. THEY WERE DRESSED IN BARKS AND HIDES AND FULLY ARMED.



"ON THE JOURNEY, YUDHISHTHIRA BECAME TROUBLED IN HIS MIND AND SO HE ADDRESSED LOMASHA—

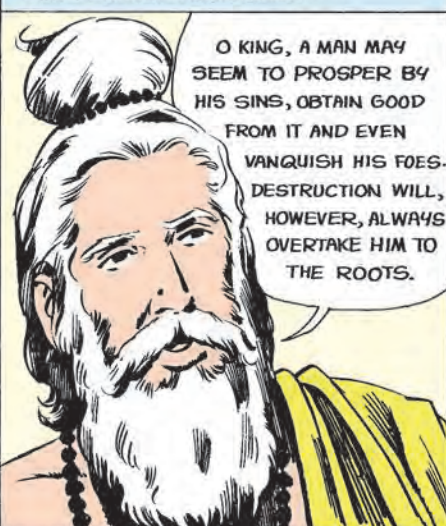


WHY DO I SUFFER?
O GREAT RISHI, I DO NOT
THINK THAT I AM
WITHOUT MERIT.



MY ENEMIES ARE
DEVOID OF GOOD
QUALITIES AND ARE NOT
ADDICTED TO DHARMA.
YET WHY DO THEY
PROSPER IN THIS
WORLD?

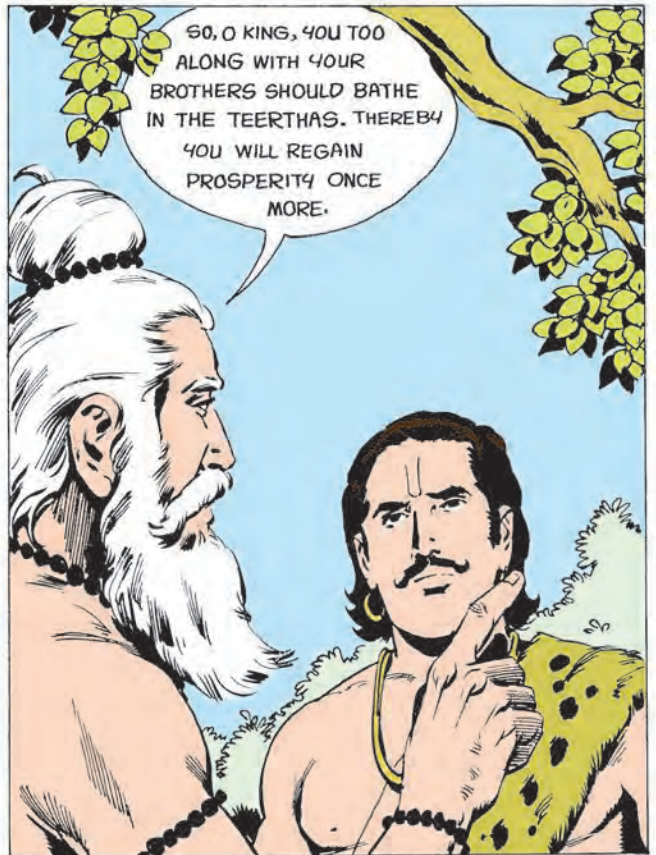
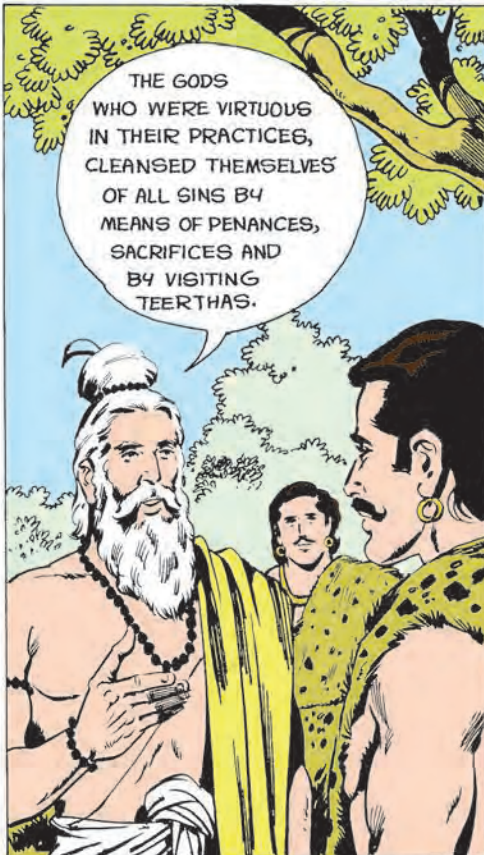
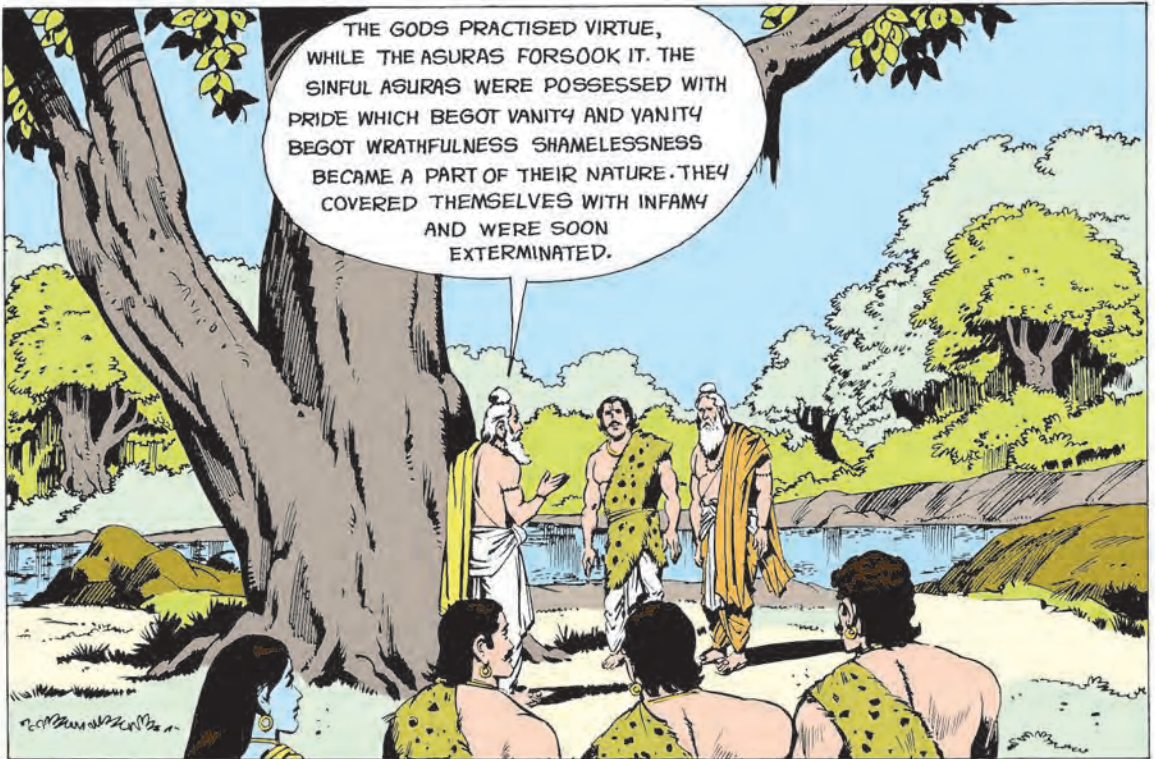
"THEN LOMASHA EXPLAINED—



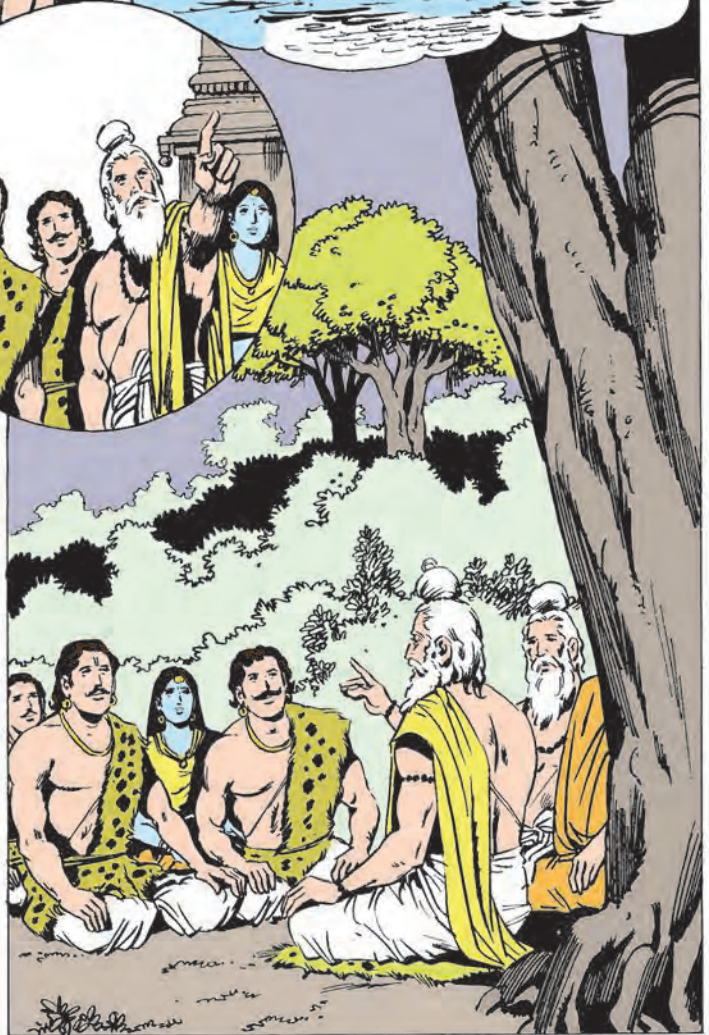
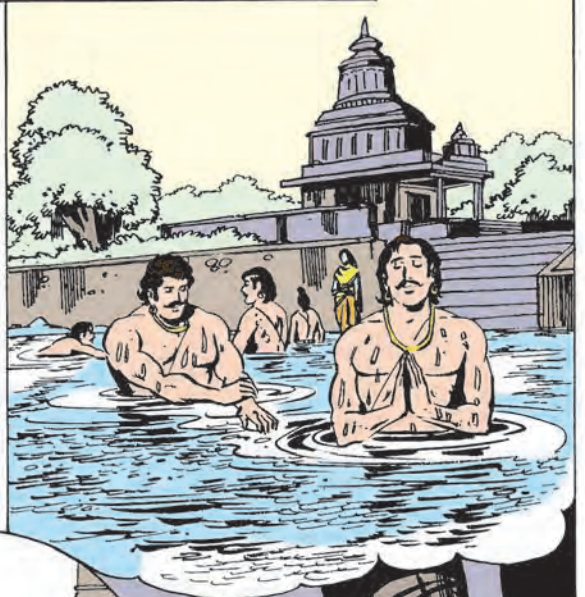
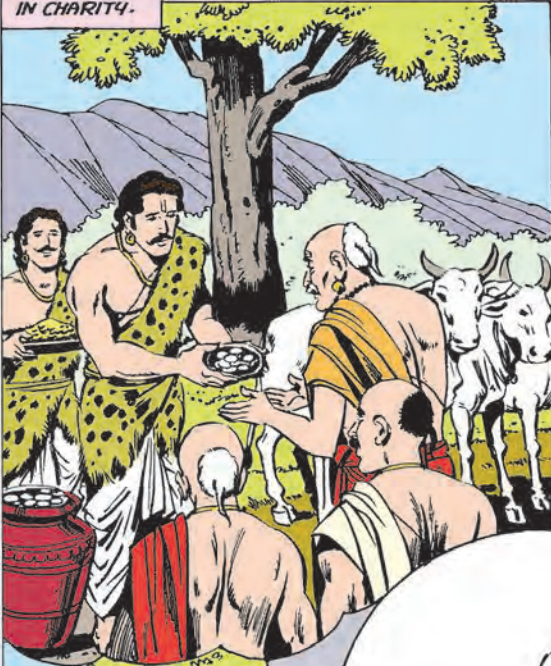
O KING, A MAN MAY
SEEM TO PROSPER BY
HIS SINS, OBTAIN GOOD
FROM IT AND EVEN
VANQUISH HIS FOES.
DESTRUCTION WILL,
HOWEVER, ALWAYS
OVERTAKE HIM TO
THE ROOTS.

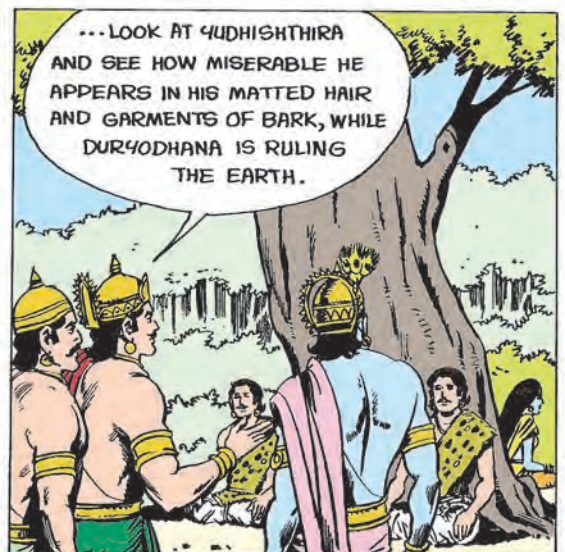
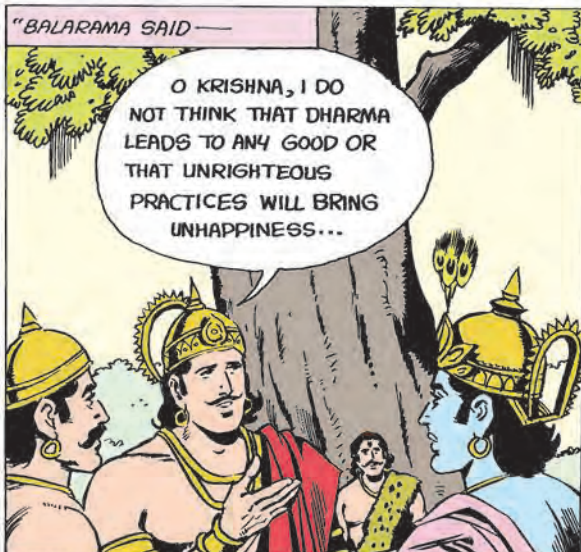
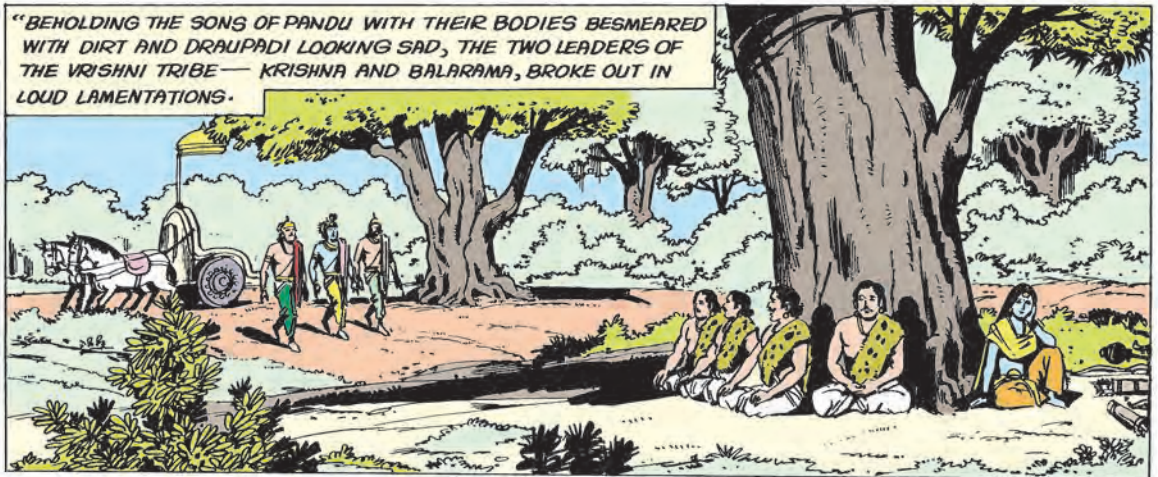
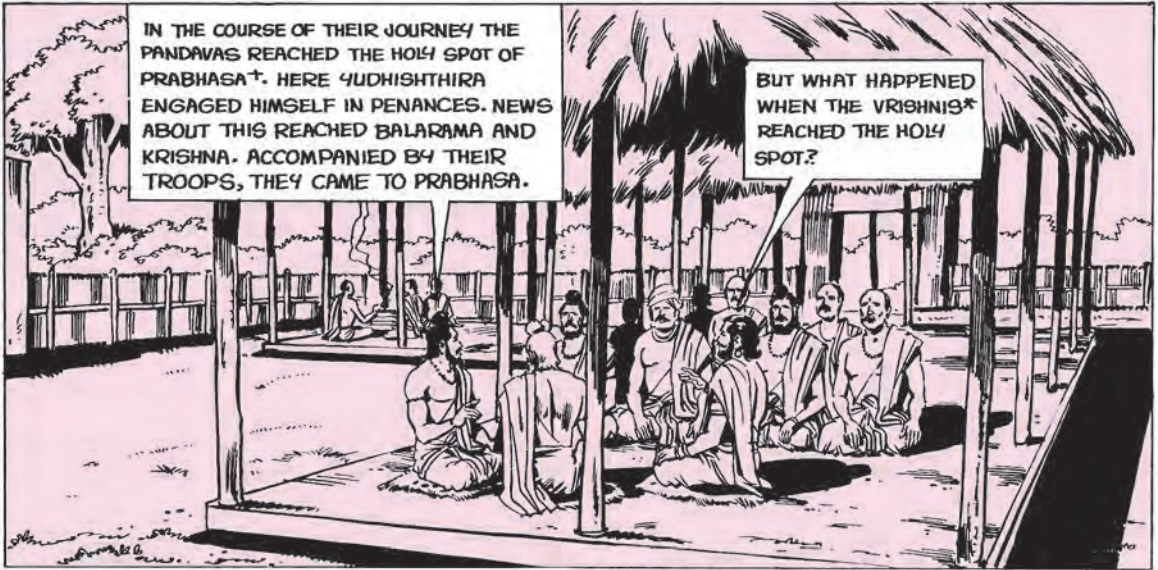


I HAVE SEEN MANY
DEMONS PROSPER IN
SIN, BUT I HAVE ALSO
SEEN THEM
DESTROYED.



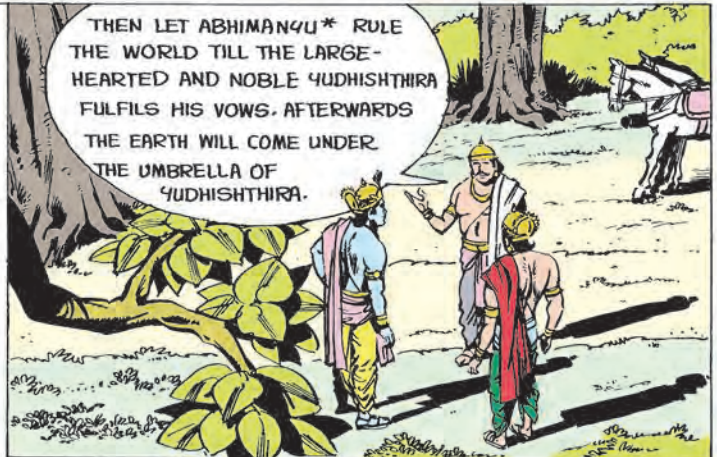
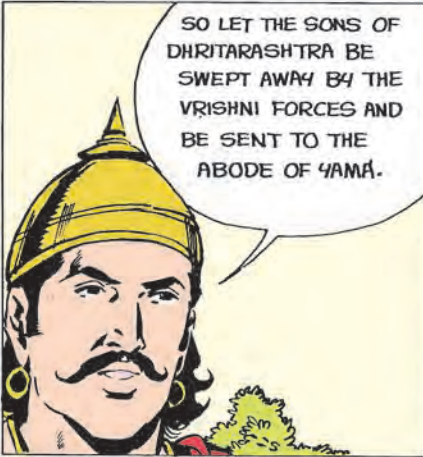
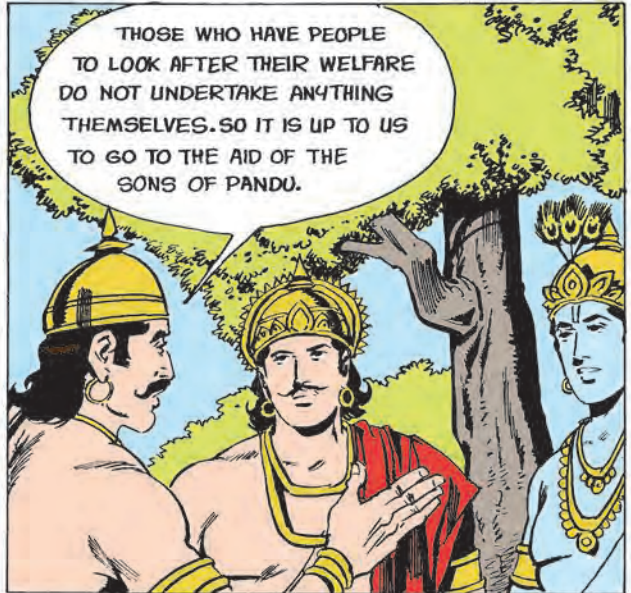
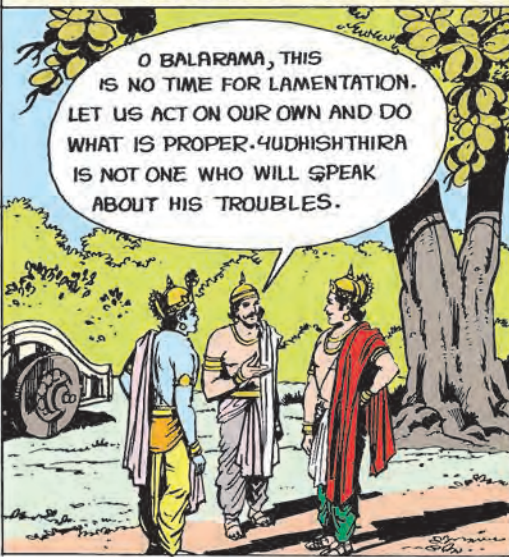
"THE PANDAVAS, ACCOMPANIED BY THE BRAHMANAS AND THE RISHIS VISITED SEVERAL TEERTHAS AND PERFORMED VARIOUS RITES AND GAVE AWAY MONEY AND COWS IN CHARITY."



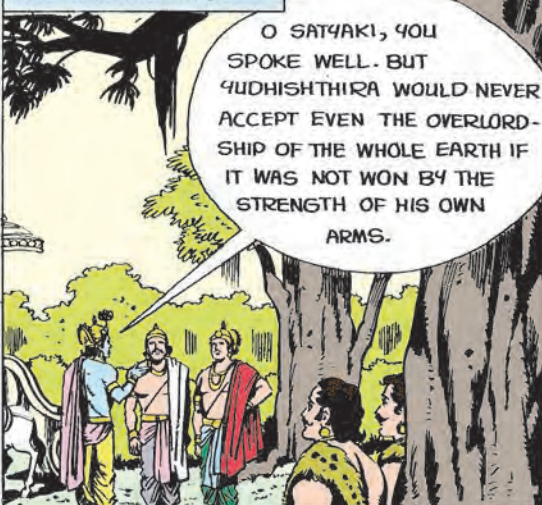


† NEAR DWARAKA * THE CLAN TO WHICH BALARAMA AND KRISHNA BELONGED.

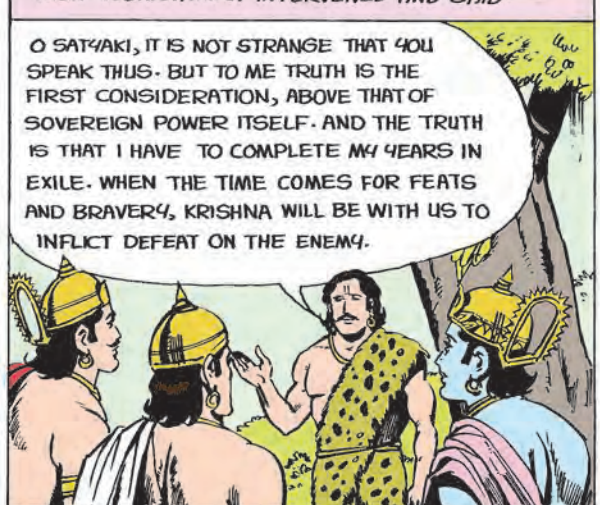
"THEN SATYAKI, ONE OF THE VRISHNIS SAID—



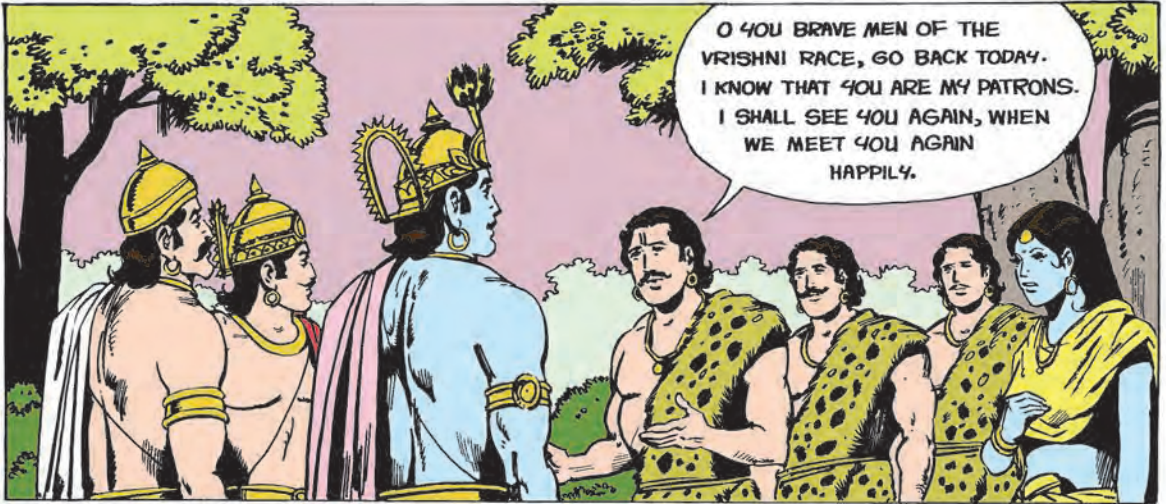
"BUT KRISHNA SAID—



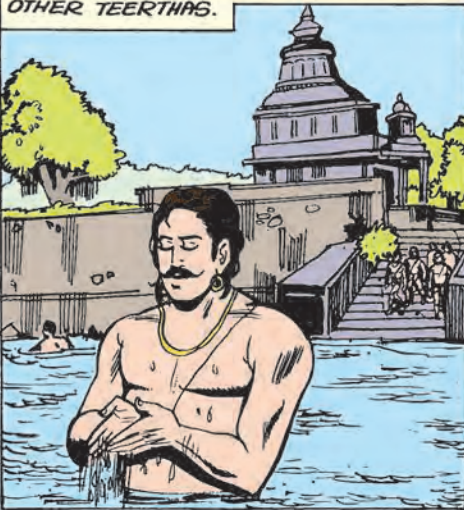
"THEN YUDHISHTHIRA INTERVENED AND SAID—



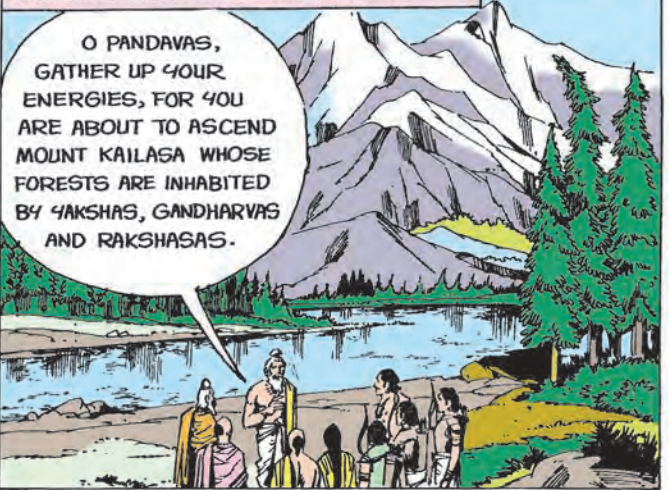
* ARJUNA'S SON



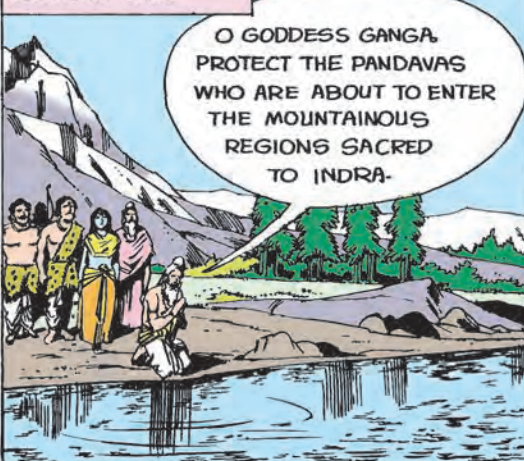
"AFTER LEAVING PRABHASA, THE PANDAVAS TRAVELLED TO VARIOUS OTHER TEERTHAS.



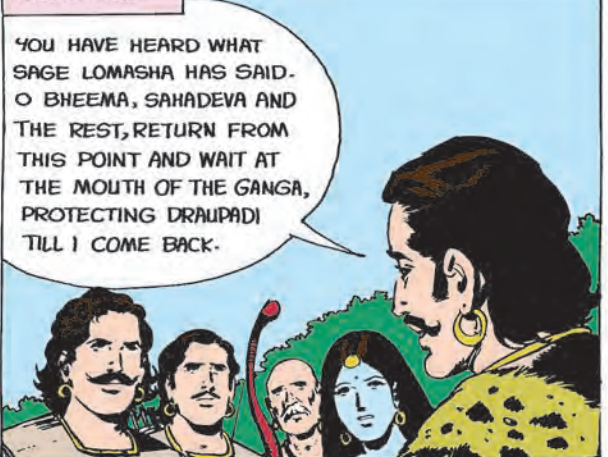
"THEY FINALLY ARRIVED IN THE FOOTHILLS OF THE HOLY HIMALAYAS. EXCEPT YUDHISHTHIRA, THE OTHERS DONNED THEIR ARMOUR. THEN LOMASHA SAID—

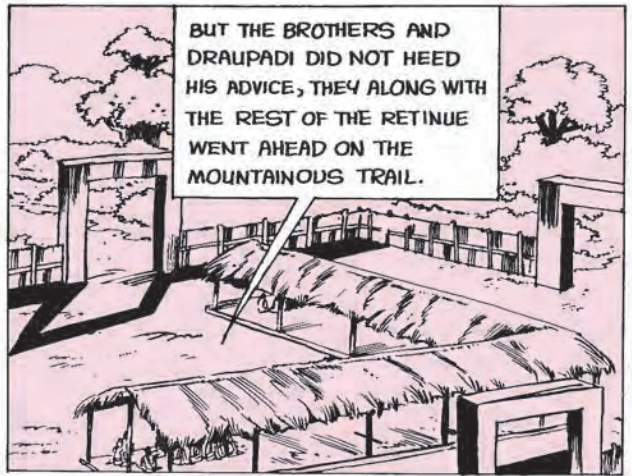
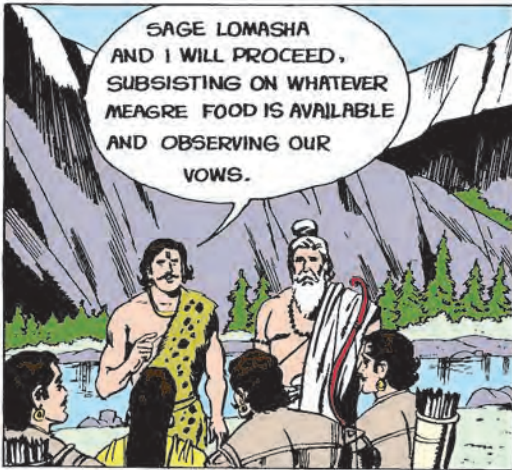


"THEN TURNING TO THE GANGA FLOWING BY, LOMASHA SAID—



"BUT A WORRIED YUDHISHTHIRA ADDRESSED HIS BROTHERS—





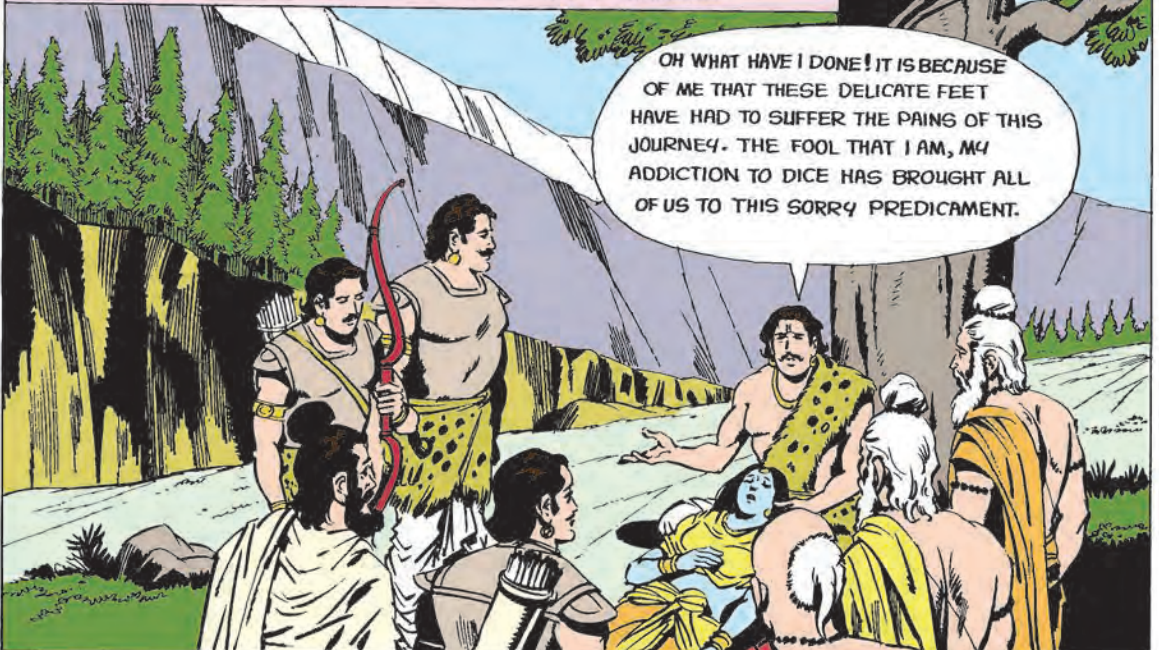
"AS THEY WALKED TOWARDS THE GANDHAMADANA FORESTS, DRAUPADI WHO WAS UNACCUSTOMED TO TRAVEL ON FOOT, FALTERED

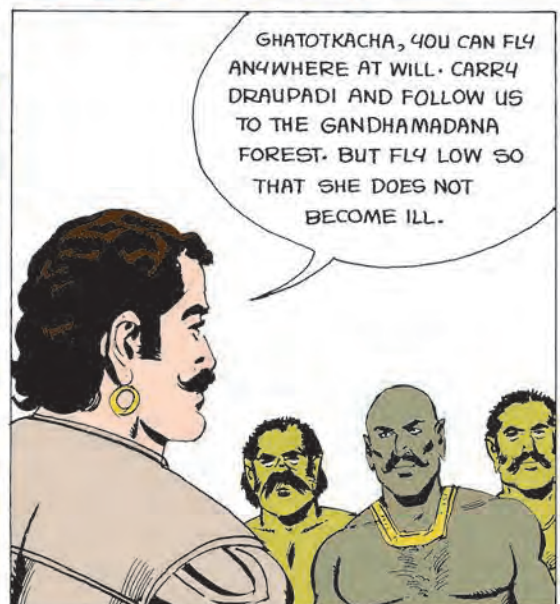
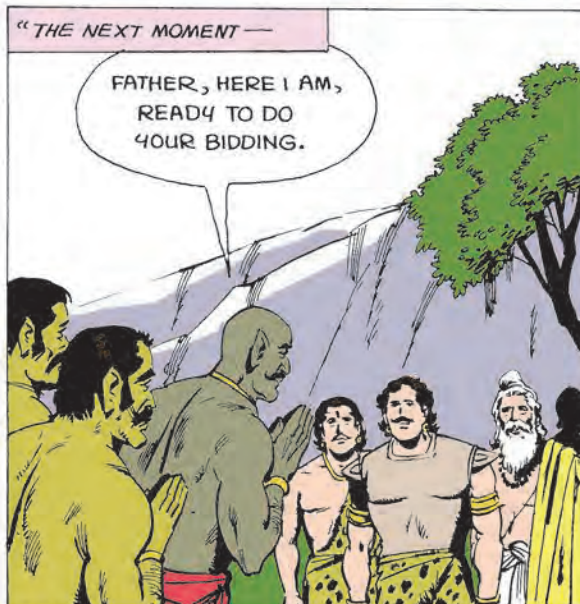
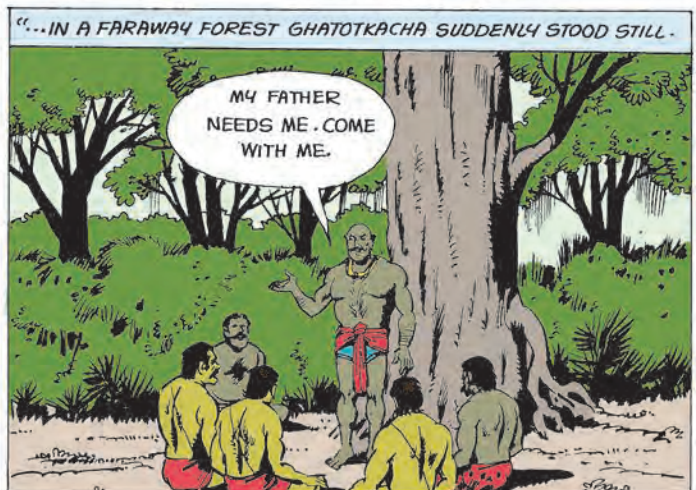
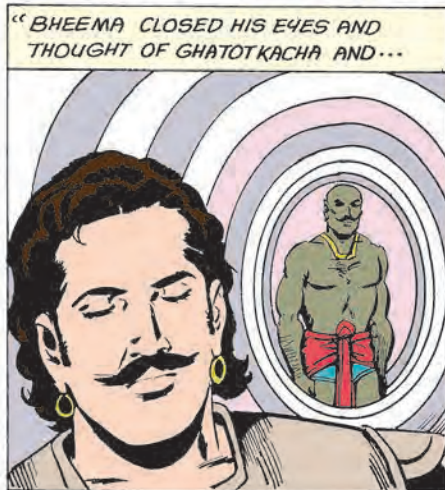
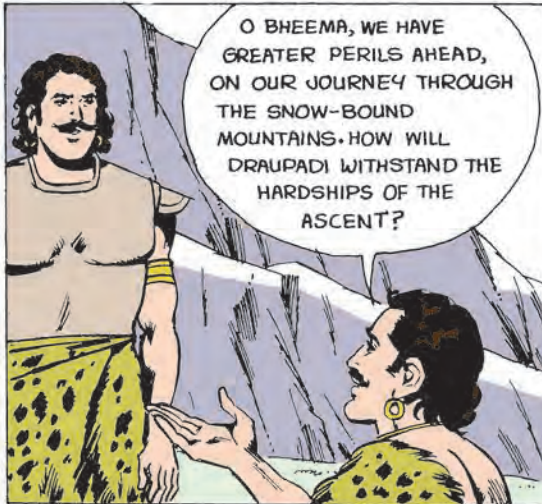


"NAKULA, WHO WAS BEHIND HER, RAN FORWARD.

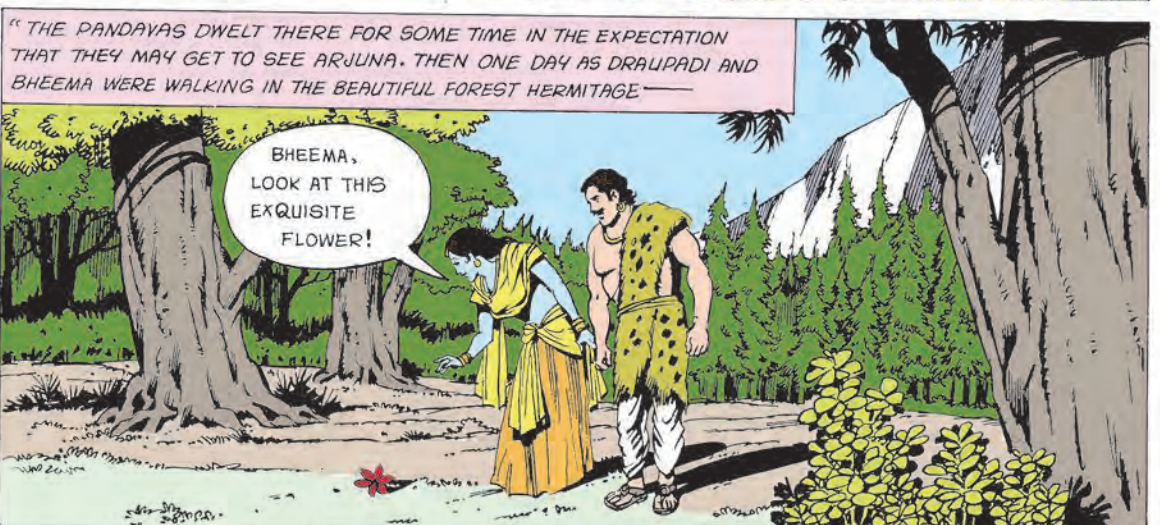
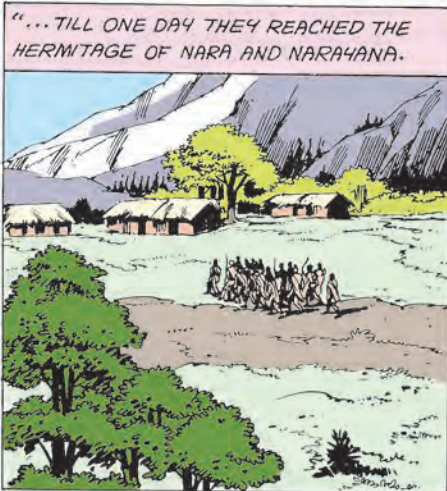
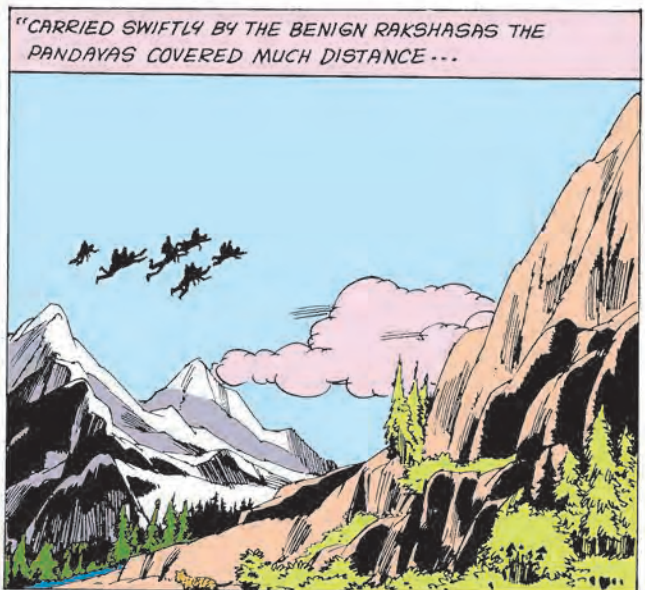
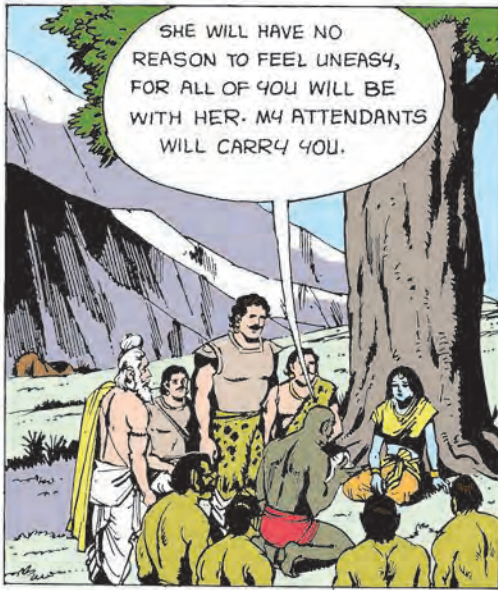


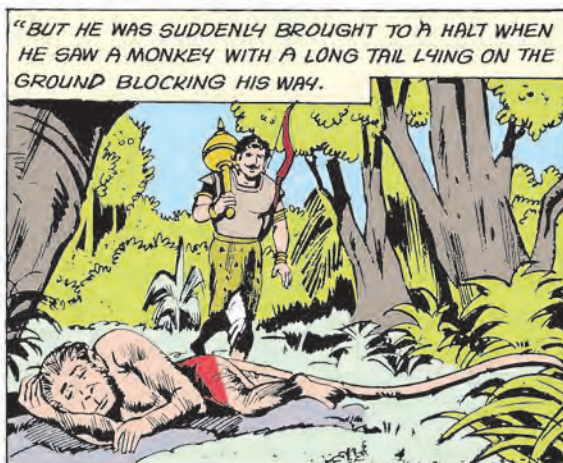
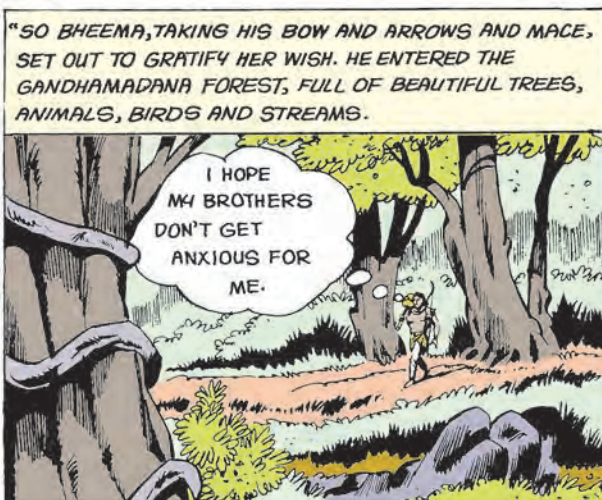
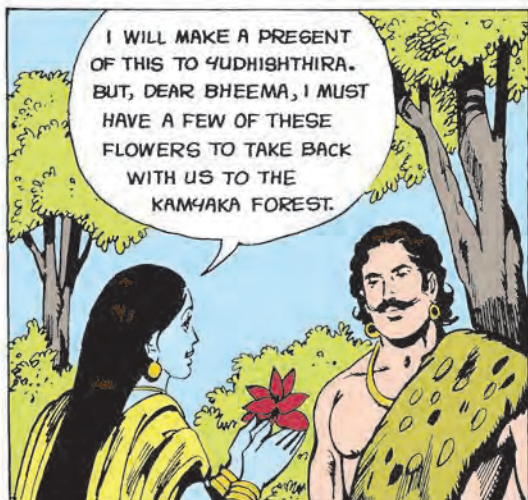
"YUDHISHTHIRA PLACED DRAUPADI'S HEAD IN HIS LAP AND LAMENTED —

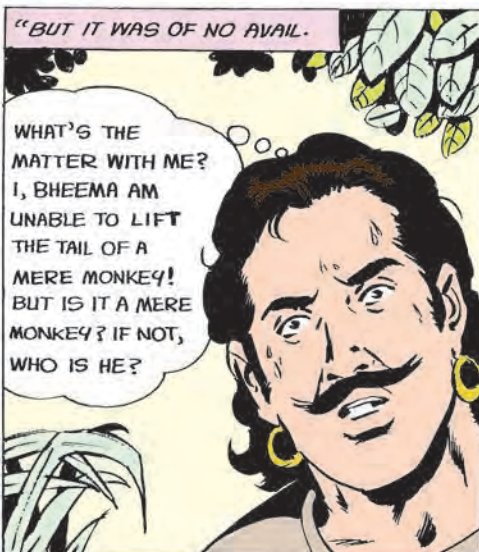
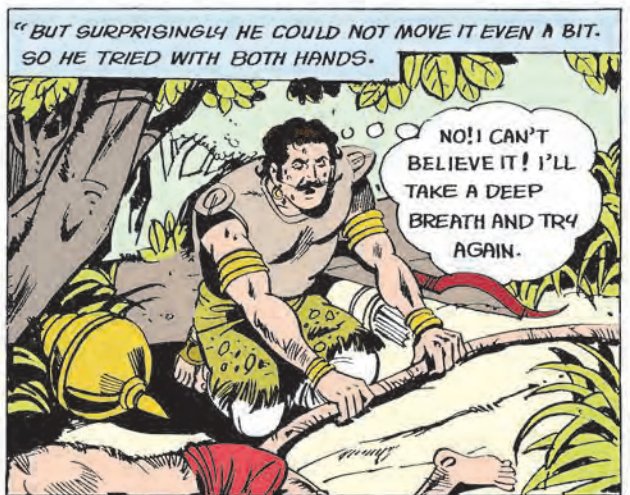




* SON OF BHEEMA AND HIDIMBA, A DEMONESS — SEE MAHABHARATA VOL. NO. 9







"THE MONKEY EMBRACED BHEEMA AND SAID:

O BHEEMA,
I AM YOUR
BROTHER
HANUMAN*!

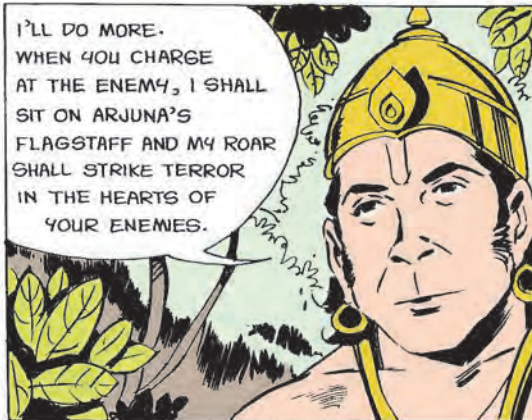
I FEEL A
STRANGE
POWER.
PERVADING
MY BODY.



MY FATIGUE HAS GONE!
FILLED WITH YOUR STRENGTH
AND YOUR BLESSINGS,
O HANUMAN, WE ARE
SURE TO CONQUER OUR
ENEMIES.

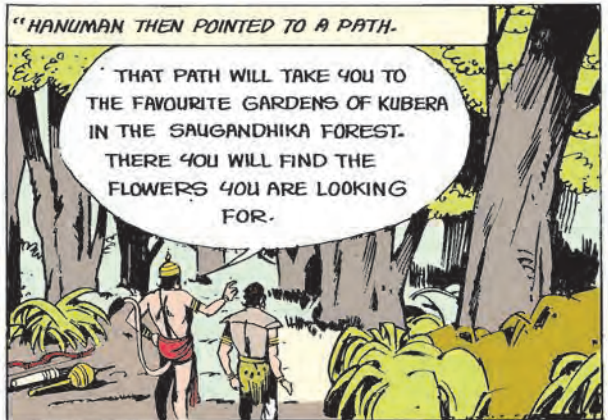


I'LL DO MORE.
WHEN YOU CHARGE
AT THE ENEMY, I SHALL
SIT ON ARJUNA'S
FLAGSTAFF AND MY ROAR
SHALL STRIKE TERROR
IN THE HEARTS OF
YOUR ENEMIES.



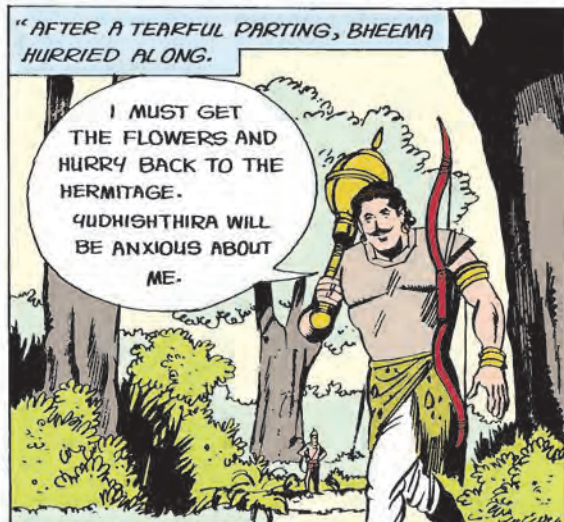
"HANUMAN THEN POINTED TO A PATH.

THAT PATH WILL TAKE YOU TO
THE FAVOURITE GARDENS OF KUBERA
IN THE SAUGANDHIKA FOREST.
THERE YOU WILL FIND THE
FLOWERS YOU ARE LOOKING
FOR.



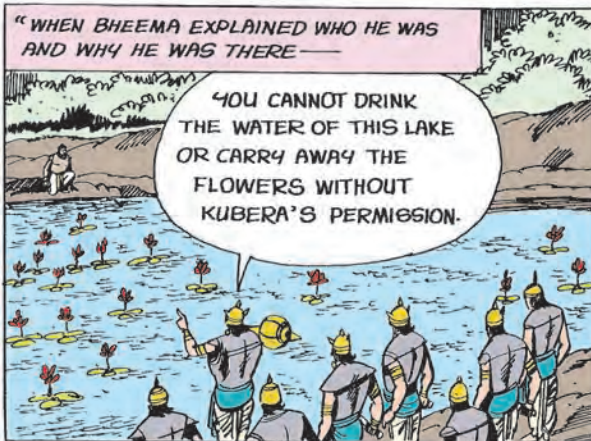
"AFTER A TEARFUL PARTING, BHEEMA
HURRIED ALONG.

I MUST GET
THE FLOWERS AND
HURRY BACK TO THE
HERMITAGE.
GUDHISHTHIRA WILL
BE ANXIOUS ABOUT
ME.

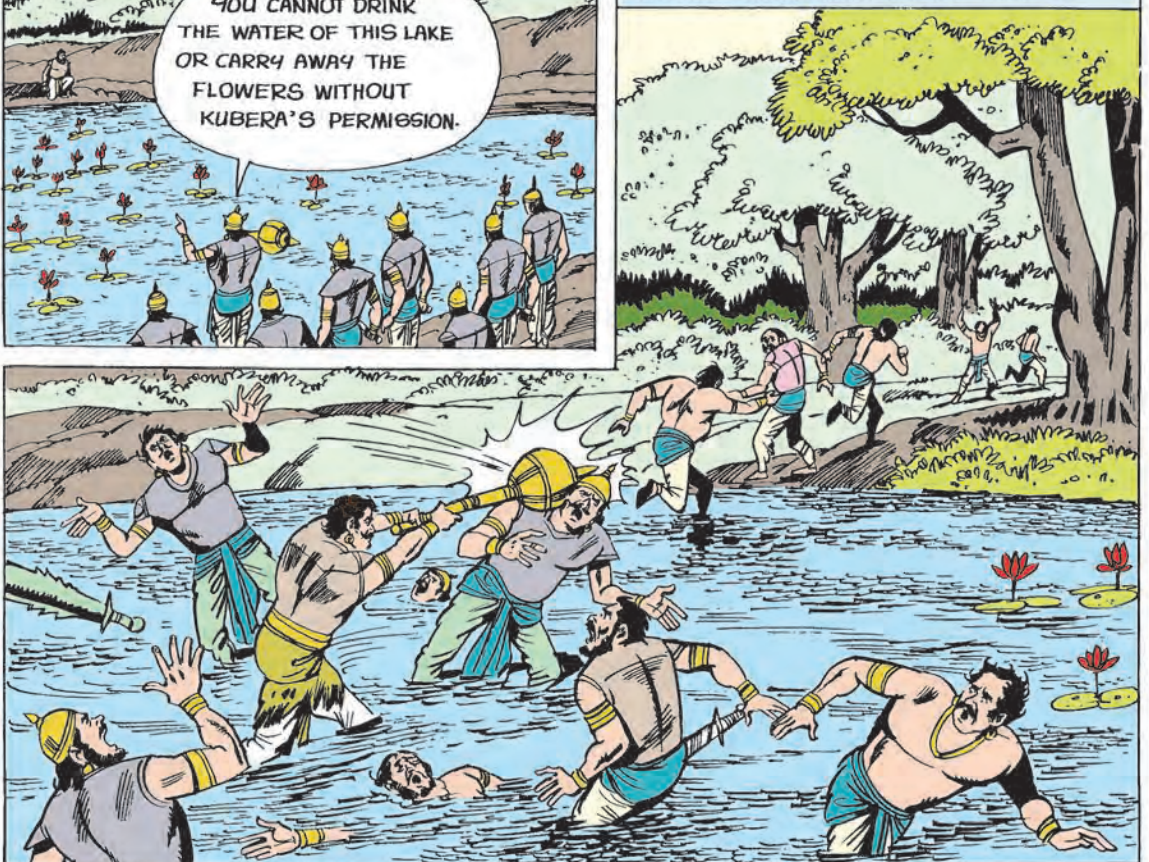


"AND FINALLY HE REACHED THE LAKE IN THE
SAUGANDHIKA FOREST WHERE THE FLOWER GREW.

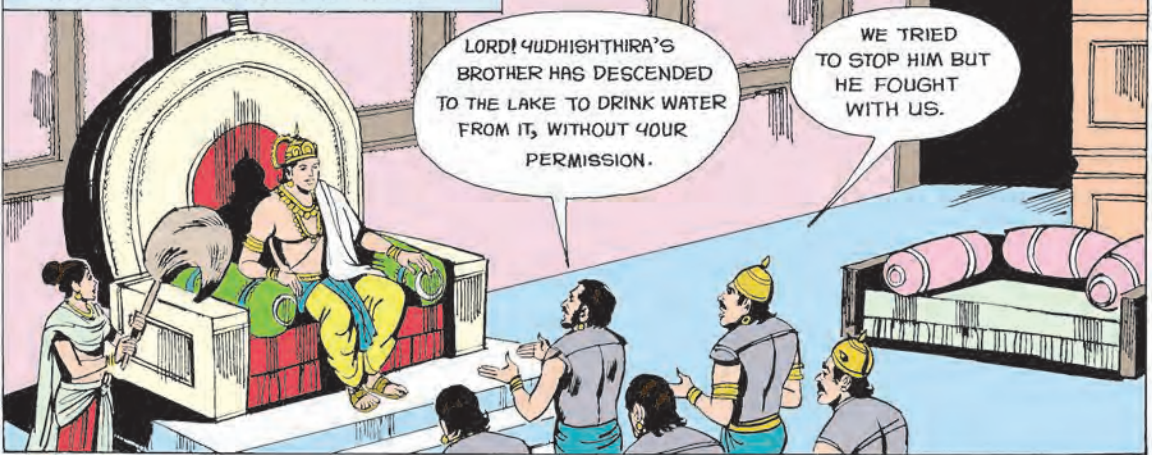




"AFTER A HOT EXCHANGE OF WORDS A FIGHT ENSUED IN WHICH BHEEMA KILLED OVER A HUNDRED RAKSHASAS. SEVERAL FLED...



"... AND REACHED THE ABODE OF KUBERA.



TO THEIR ASTONISHMENT KUBERA SMILED —



"BHEEMA COLLECTED THE RARE CELESTIAL FLOWERS.



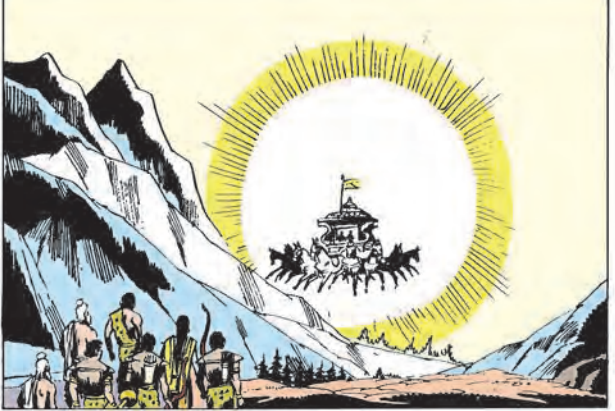
"WHEN HE RETURNED, THE PANDAVAS CONTINUED ON THEIR JOURNEY VISITING VARIOUS TEERTHAS AND HERMITAGES. BEHOLDING ROMANTIC WOODS IN THE MOUNTAINS REMINDED THEM OF ARJUNA WHO HAD BEEN AWAY FROM THEM FOR FIVE YEARS.



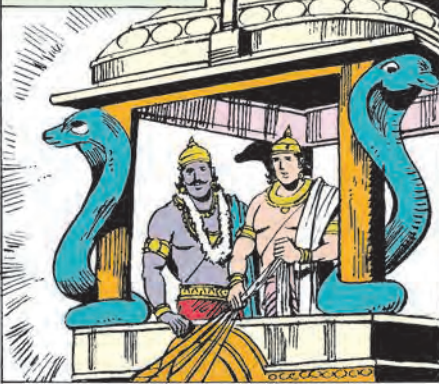
"ONE DAY THE PANDAVAS SUDDENLY SAW A BRIGHT OBJECT ILLUMINATING THE SKY AND..."



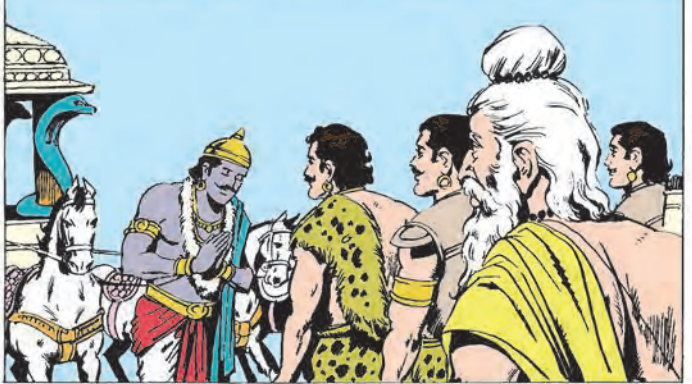
...SOON INDRA'S VEHICLE DRAWN BY A HUNDRED HORSES APPEARED IN FRONT OF THEM.



"SEATED IN THE CHARIOT DRIVEN BY MATALI WAS ARJUNA DECKED IN GARLANDS AND ORNAMENTS."



"HE ALIGHTED AND BOWED TO HIS ELDERS. AND THERE WAS MUCH REJOICING AMONG THE BROTHERS."



"AFTER MATALI HAD LEFT, ARJUNA PRESENTED TO DRAUPADI THE PRECIOUS GEMS AND ORNAMENTS THAT INDRA HAD GIVEN HIM."



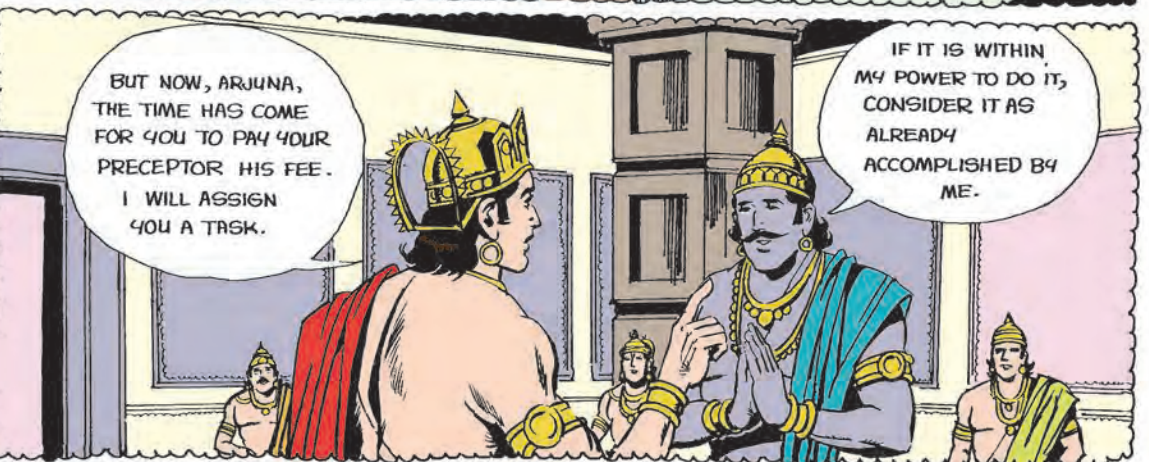
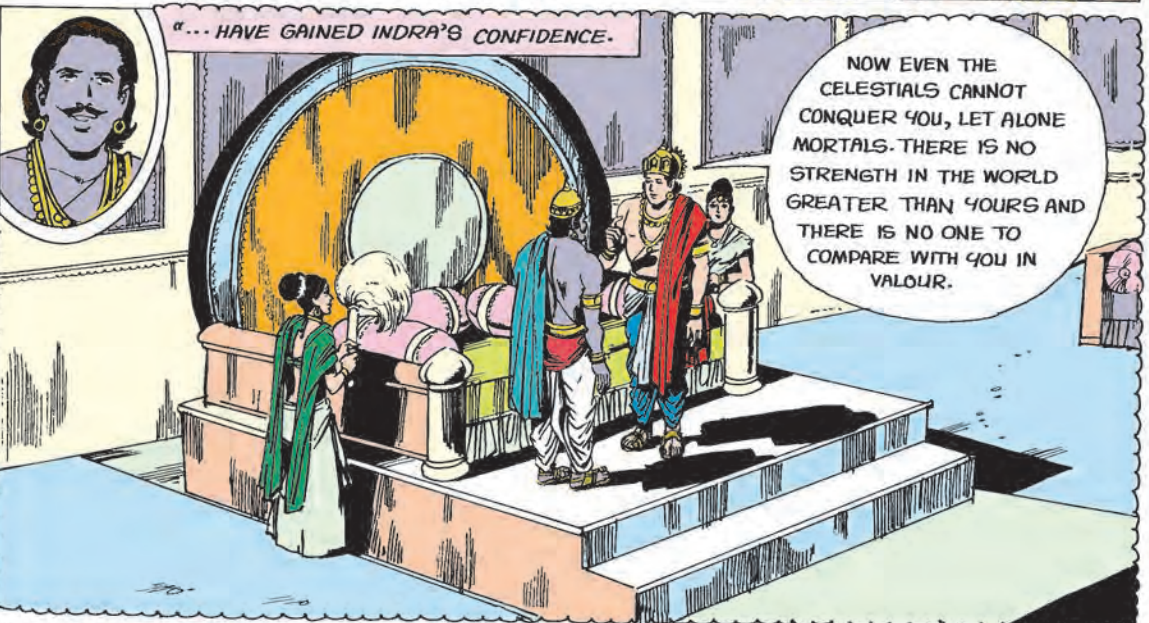
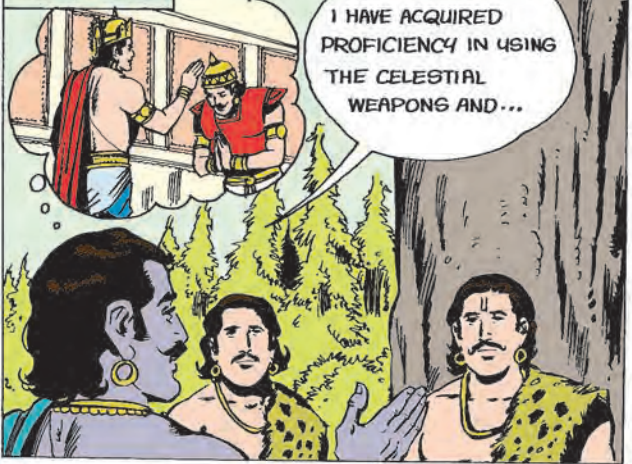
"INDRA THEN DESCENDED FROM HEAVEN AND BLESSED YUDHISHTHIRA."

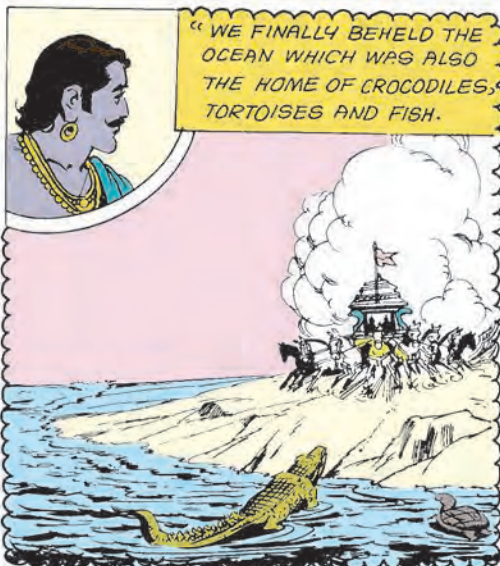
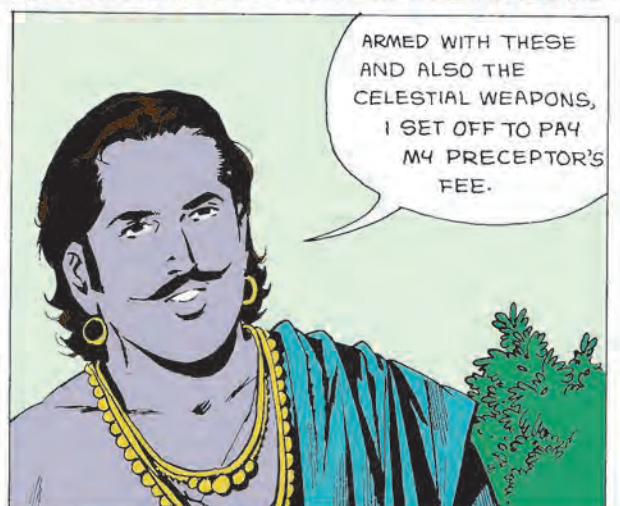
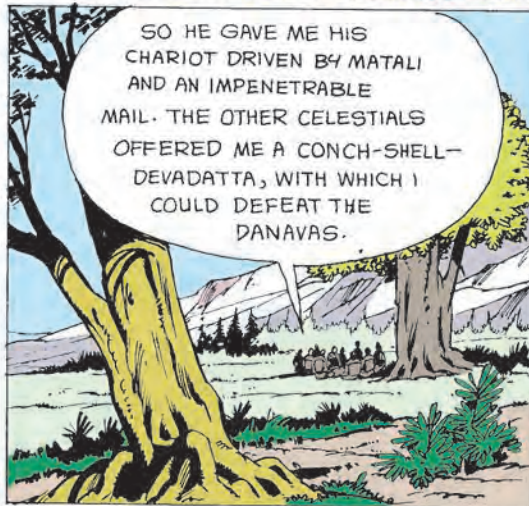
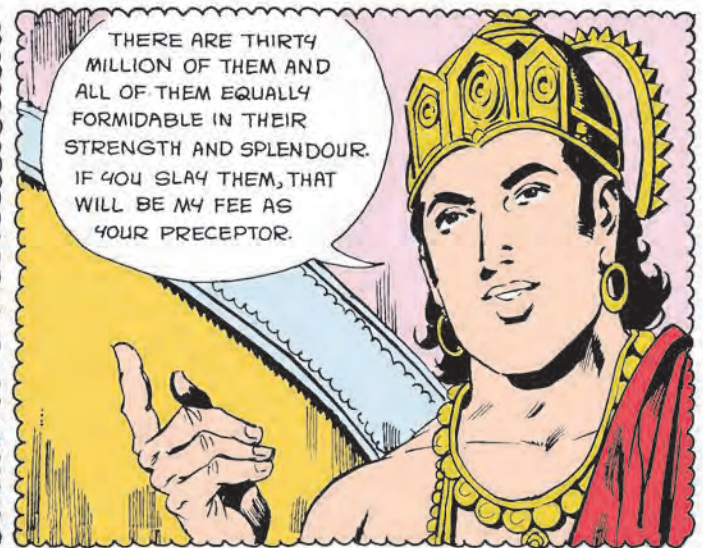
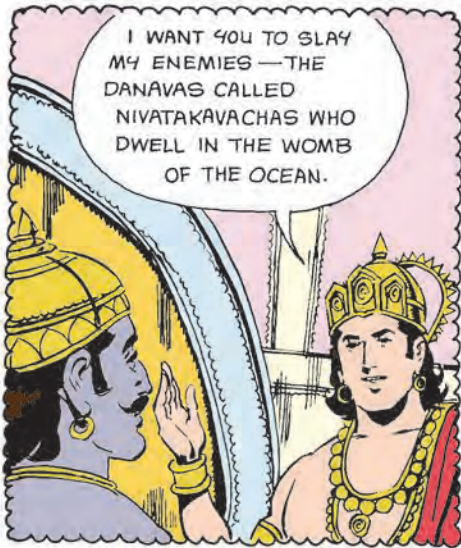


"AFTER INDRA DEPARTED, THE PANDAVAS QUESTIONED ARJUNA ABOUT HIS STAY IN INDRALOKA—



"ARJUNA NARRATED TO THEM HOW HE GOT THE WEAPONS AND HOW HE HAD BEFRIENDED CHITRASENA IN INDRALOKA.

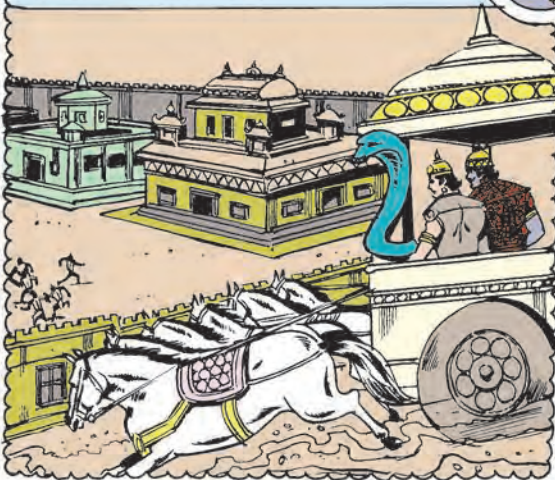




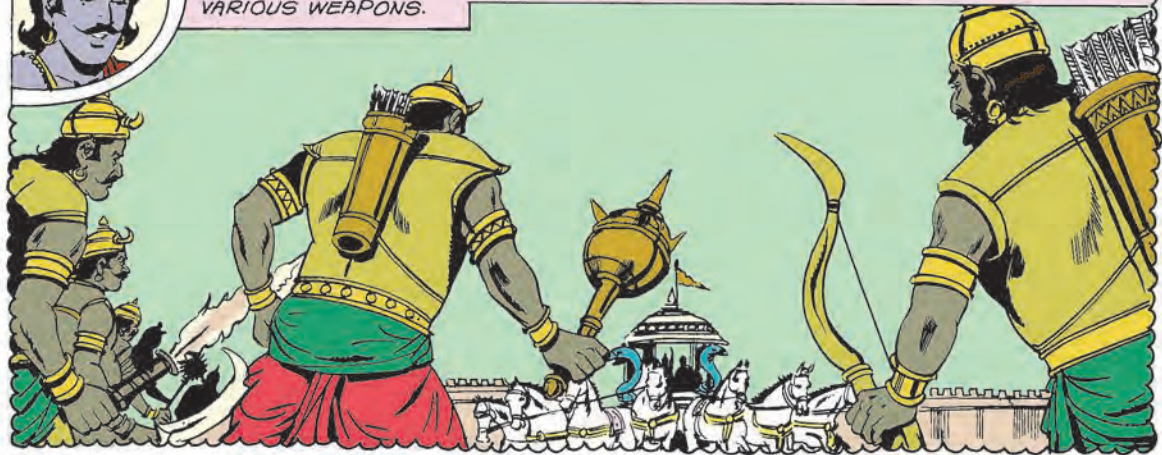
"TAKING ME TO BE INDRA, THE DANAVAS TOOK FRIGHT. THEY SHUT THE GATES OF THE CITY AND BEGAN TO ARM THEMSELVES.



THEREUPON I BLEW THE POWERFUL CONCH-SHELL — DEVADATTA — AND THE AIR WAS FILLED WITH THE REVERBERATIONS OF ITS SOUND.



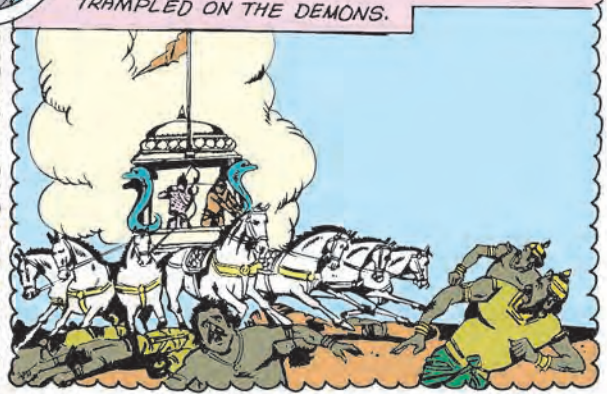
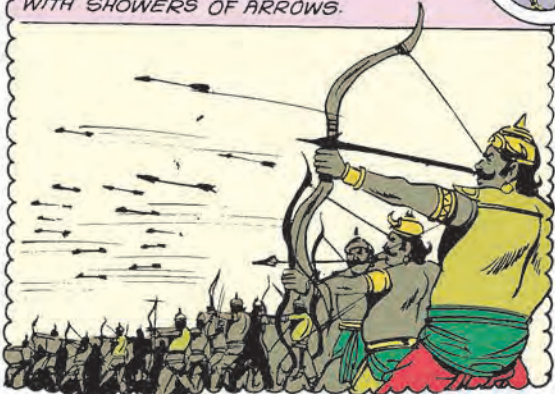
THEN O YUDHISHTHIRA, MATALI LANDED THE CHARIOT AND THE DANAVAS MADE THEIR APPEARANCE IN THEIR THOUSANDS, DONNING DIVERSE MAIL AND CARRYING VARIOUS WEAPONS.

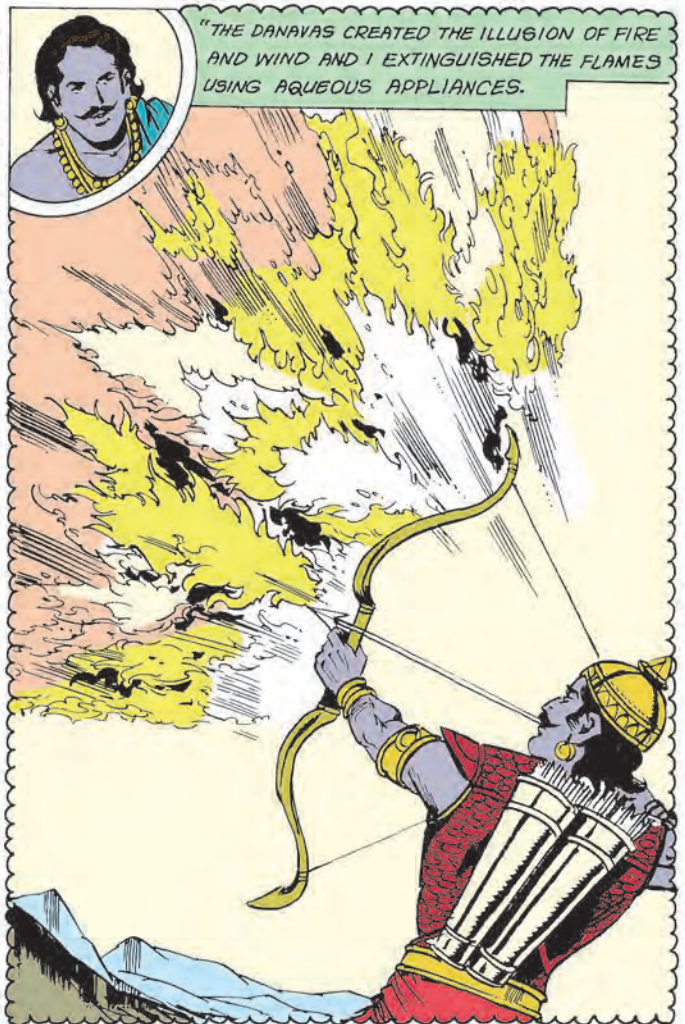
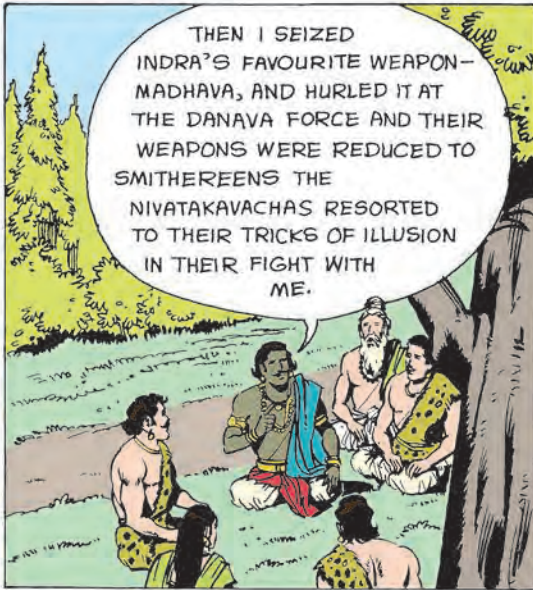


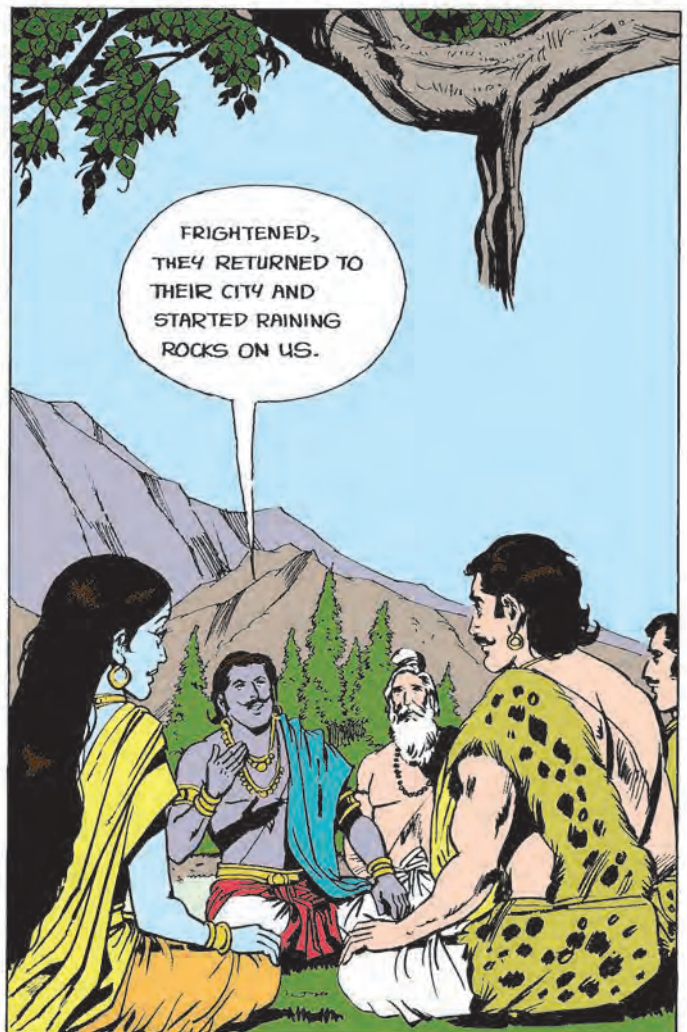
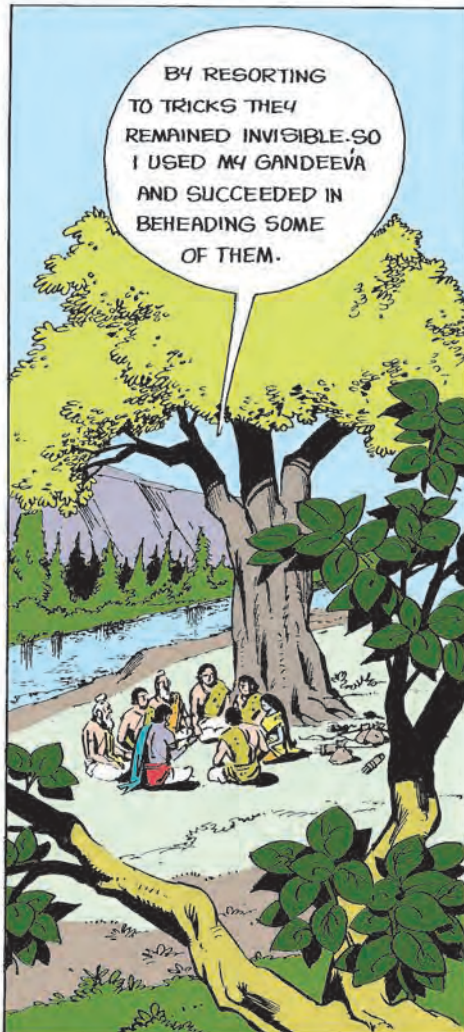
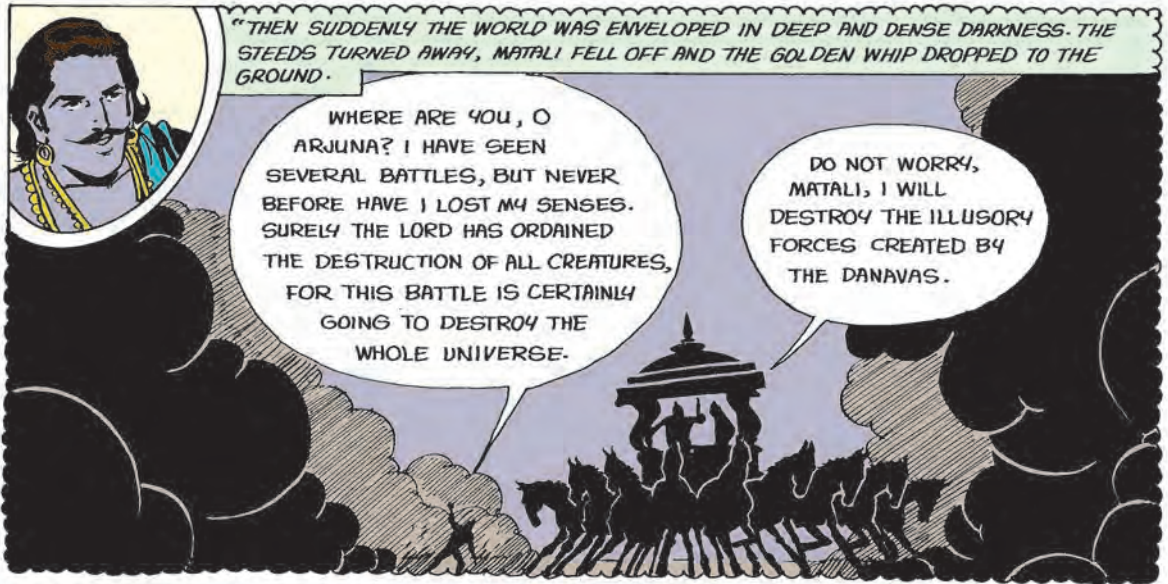
"THEY RUSHED AT US, OBSTRUCTING THE COURSE OF THE VEHICLE, HEMMING US ON ALL SIDES, THEY COVERED US WITH SHOWERS OF ARROWS.

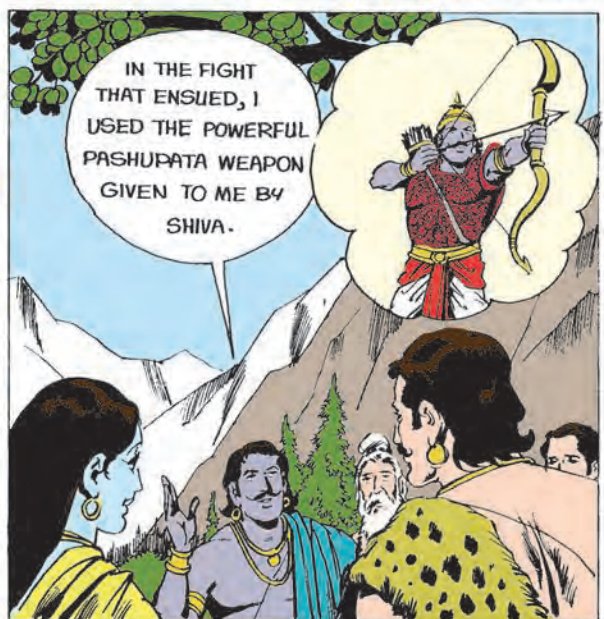
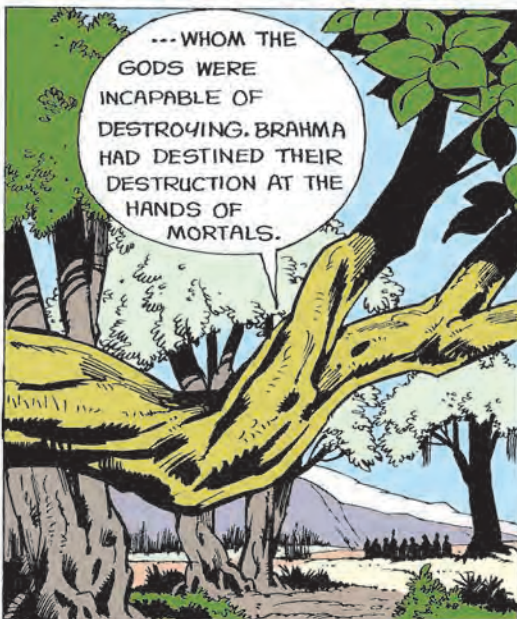
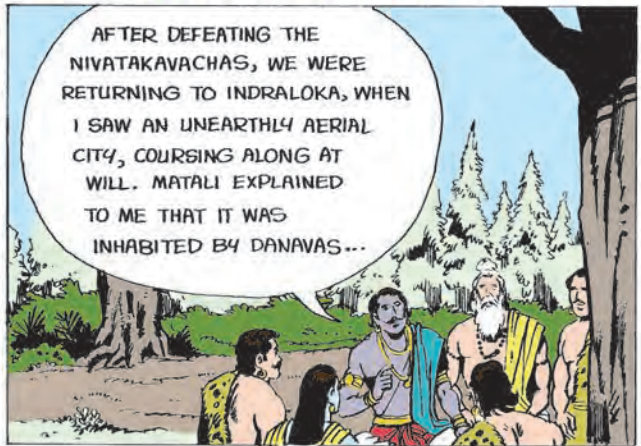
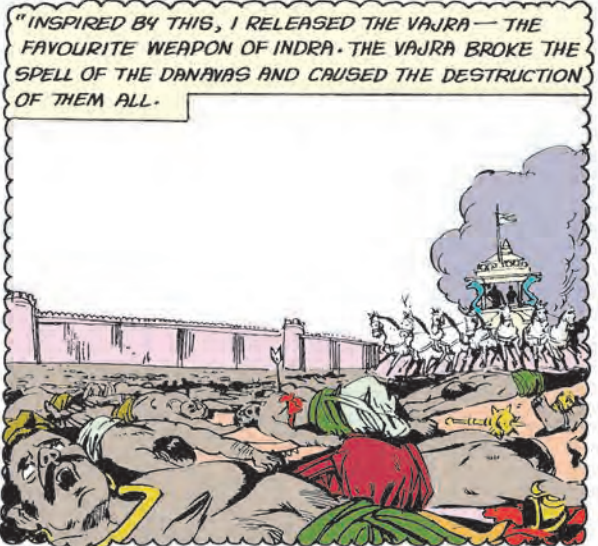


"AIMING MY GANDEEVA I SHOT OUT ARROWS IN ALL DIRECTIONS. AND AS THE DANAVAS WERE DRIVEN BACK, MATALI SPED THE STEEDS, WHO TRAMPLED ON THE DEMONS.









AS I DISCHARGED THE WEAPON,
THOUSANDS OF STRANGE BEINGS
APPEARED WIELDING WEAPONS.



THESE BEINGS FOUGHT A FEROCIOUS
BATTLE WITH THE DANAVAS, ANNIHILATING
THEM COMPLETELY.



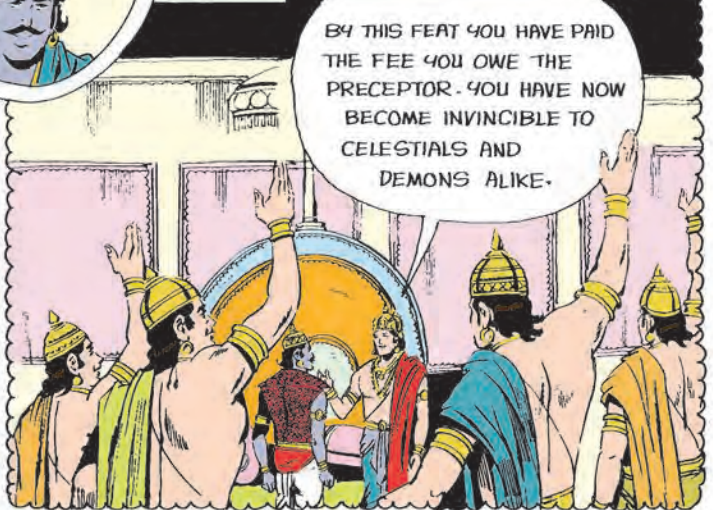
ON OUR RETURN TO INDRALOKA,
INDRA WAS VERY PLEASED —



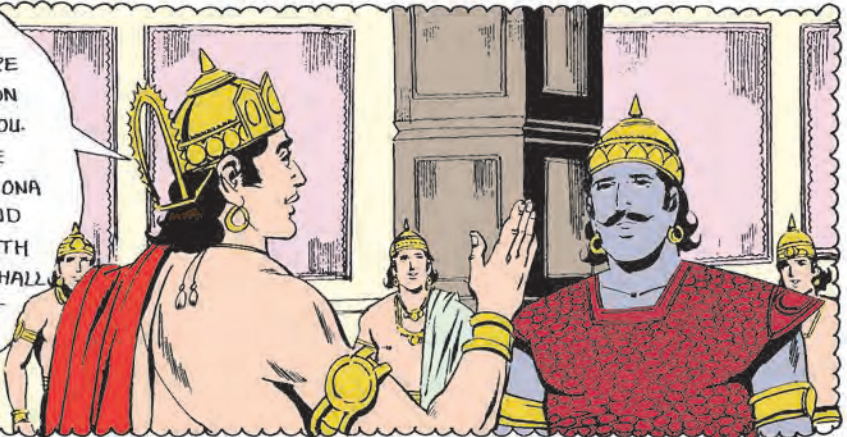
EVEN THE CELESTIALS CHEERED ME AND INDRA
SAID —

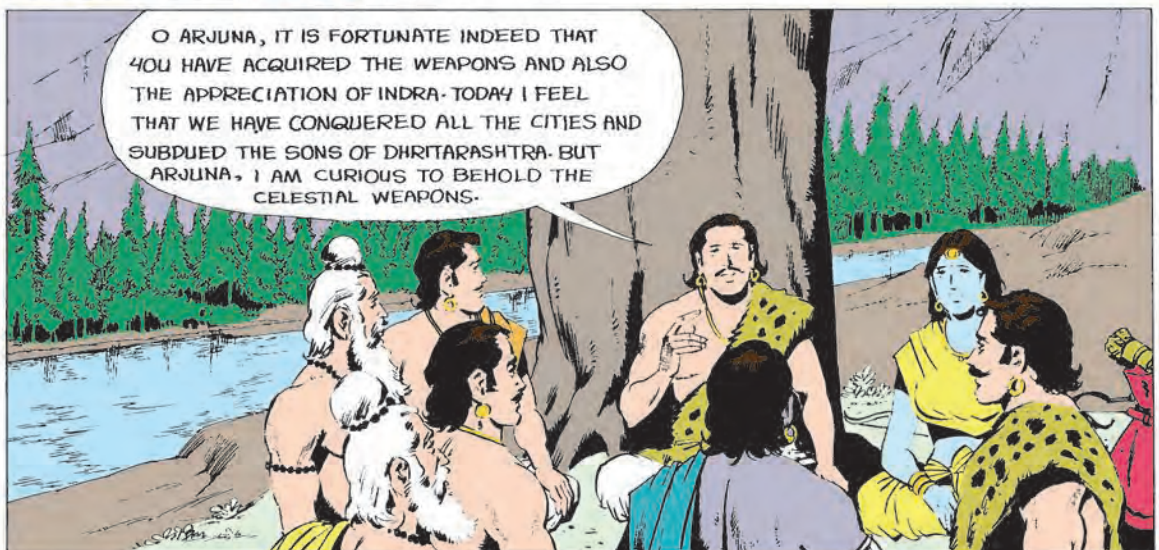
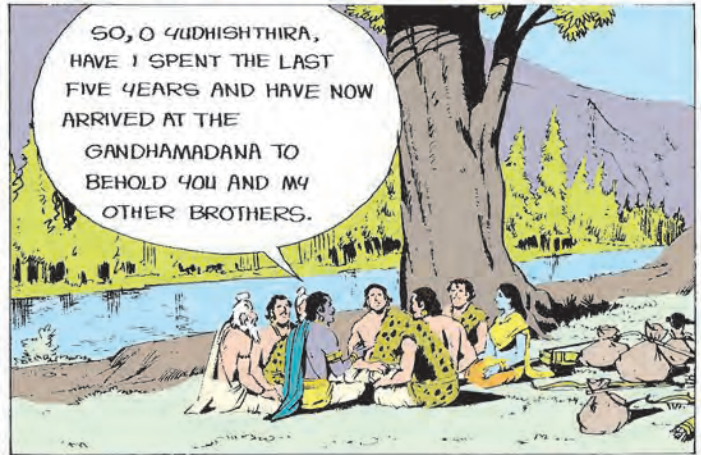
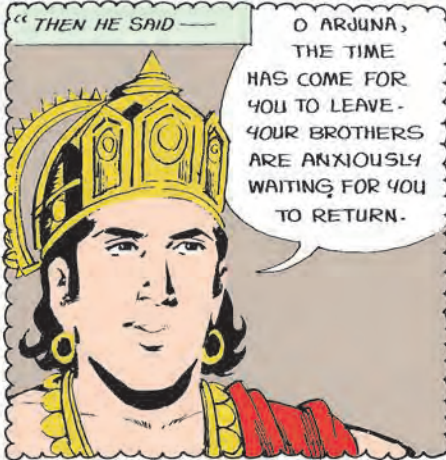
WELL DONE!
WELL DONE!

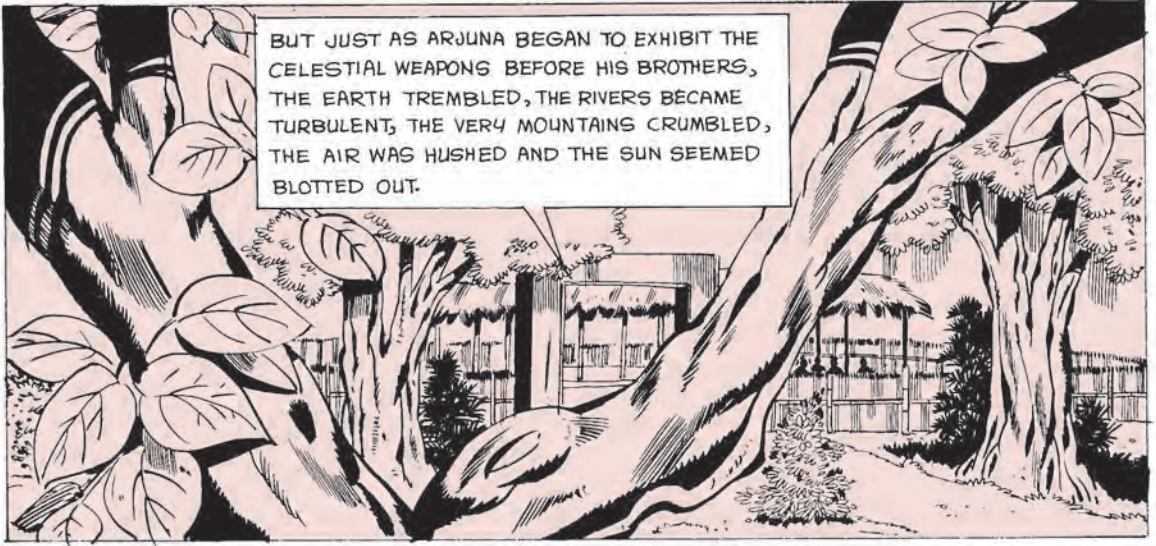
BY THIS FEAT YOU HAVE PAID
THE FEE YOU OWE THE
PRECEPTOR. YOU HAVE NOW
BECOME INVINCIBLE TO
CELESTIALS AND
DEMONS ALIKE.



ALL THE CELESTIAL
WEAPONS, O ARJUNA, ARE
WITH YOU, SO NO MAN ON
EARTH CAN OVERPOWER YOU.
AND WHEN YOU ARE ON THE
FIELD BHEESHMA AND DRONA
AND KRIPA AND KARNA AND
SHAKUNI TOGETHER WITH
OTHER KSHATRIYAS SHALL
NOT AMOUNT TO A ONE-
SIXTEENTH PART OF
YOU.

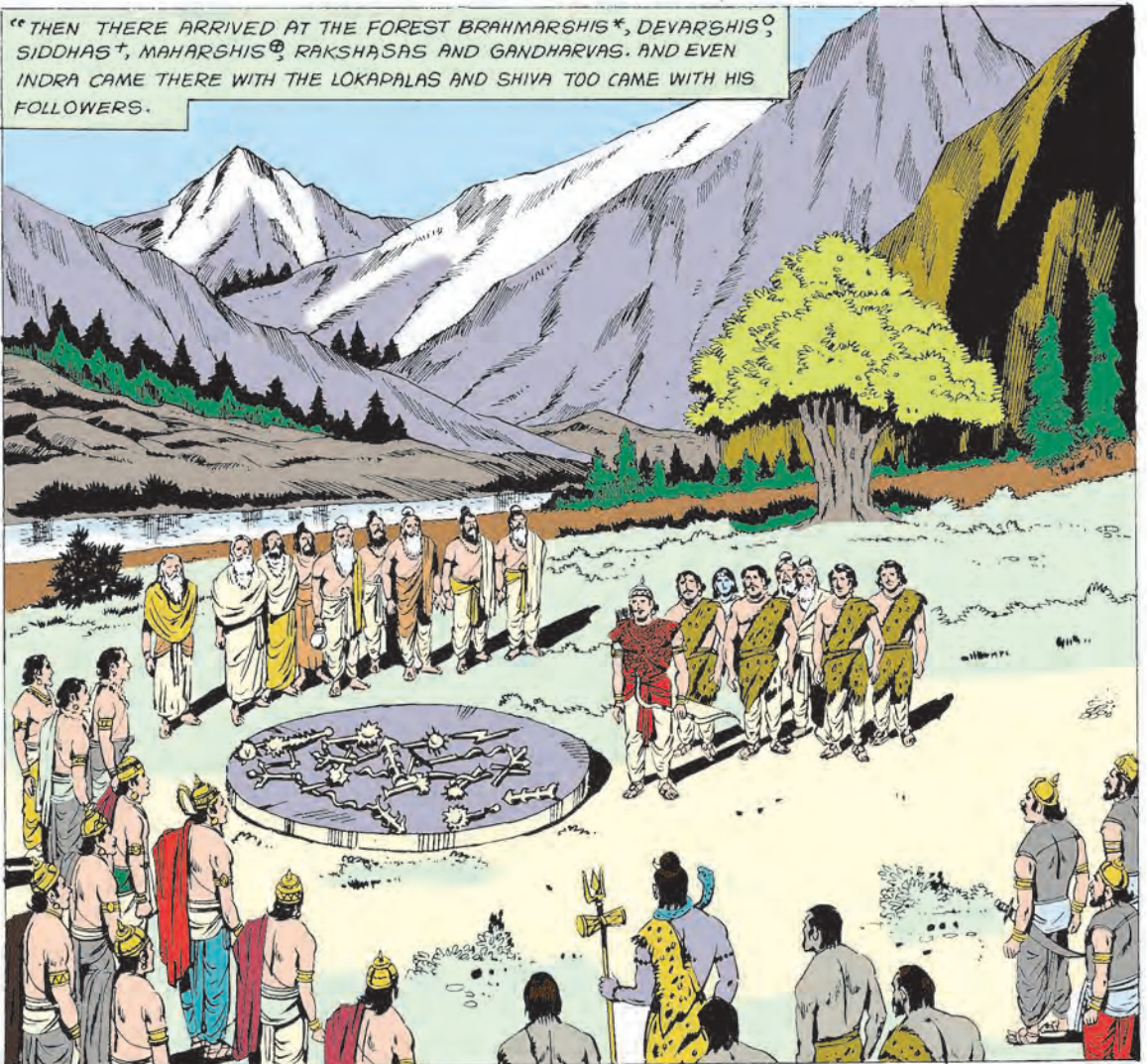






BUT JUST AS ARJUNA BEGAN TO EXHIBIT THE CELESTIAL WEAPONS BEFORE HIS BROTHERS, THE EARTH TREMBLED, THE RIVERS BECAME TURBULENT, THE VERY MOUNTAINS CRUMBLED, THE AIR WAS HUSHED AND THE SUN SEEMED BLOTTED OUT.

"THEN THERE ARRIVED AT THE FOREST BRAHMARSHIS*, DEVARSHIS^o, SIDDHAS⁺, MAHARSHIS^o, RAKSHASAS AND GANDHARVAS. AND EVEN INDRA CAME THERE WITH THE LOKAPALAS AND SHIVA TOO CAME WITH HIS FOLLOWERS.



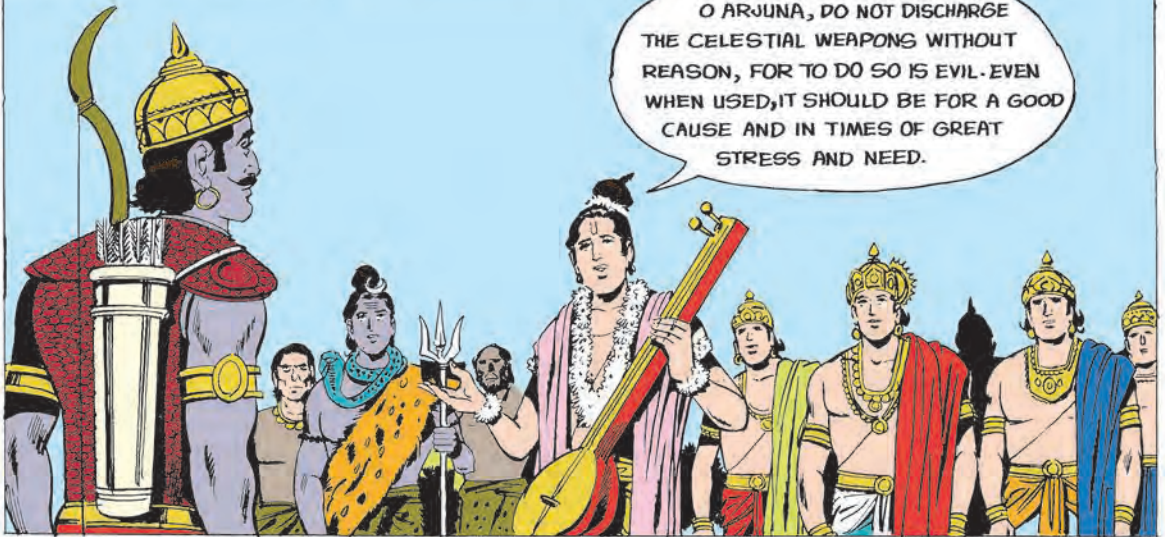
*Most venerated Rishis

^oPriests of the Gods

⁺Pure and holy beings

^oSeven great Rishis

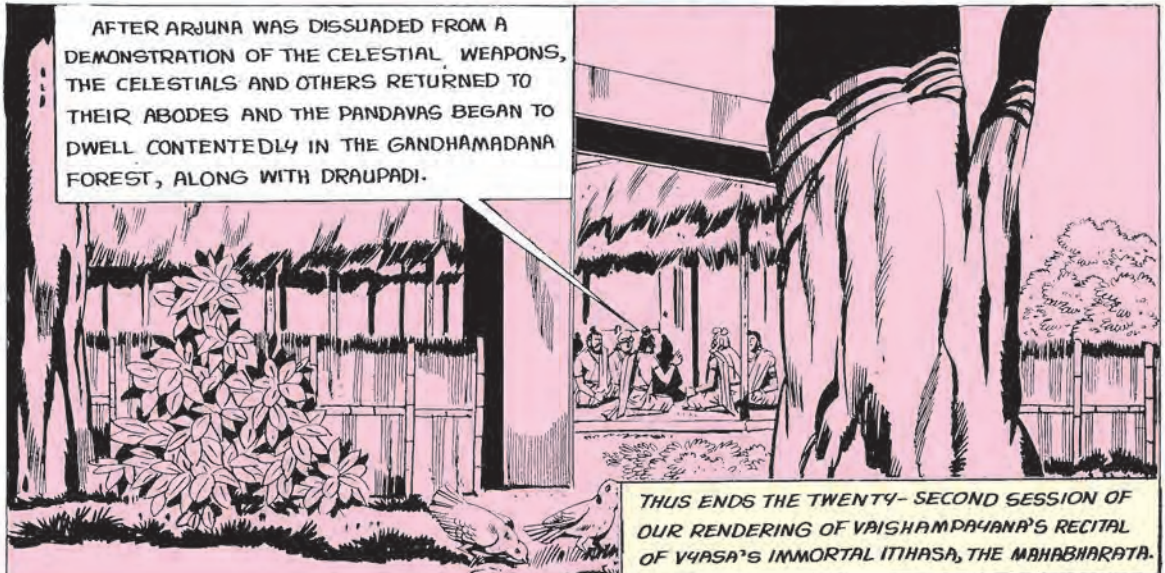
"AND THEN NARADA APPEARED BEFORE THE PANDAVAS AS A CELESTIAL MESSENGER."



IF THESE WEAPONS ARE NOT USED IN THE RIGHT MANNER, IT COULD CAUSE THE DESTRUCTION OF THE THREE WORLDS. SO DO NOT DEMONSTRATE THE POWER OF THE WEAPONS. WHEN THERE IS A WAR YOU WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO SO.



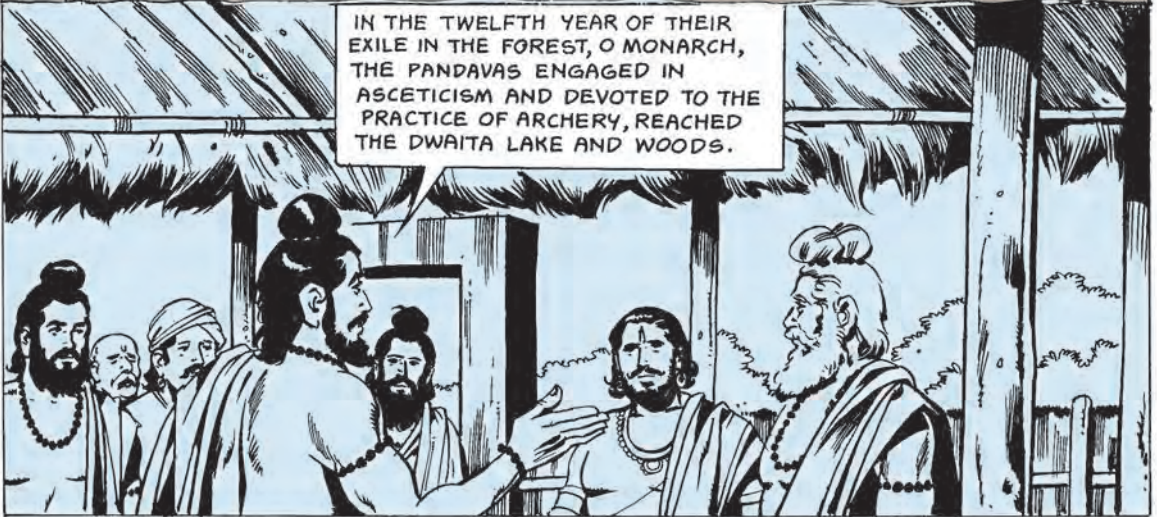
AFTER ARJUNA WAS DISSUADED FROM A DEMONSTRATION OF THE CELESTIAL WEAPONS, THE CELESTIALS AND OTHERS RETURNED TO THEIR ABODES AND THE PANDAVAS BEGAN TO DWELL CONTENTEDLY IN THE GANDHAMADANA FOREST, ALONG WITH DRAUPADI.



Mahabharata - 23

DURYODHANA HUMBLD

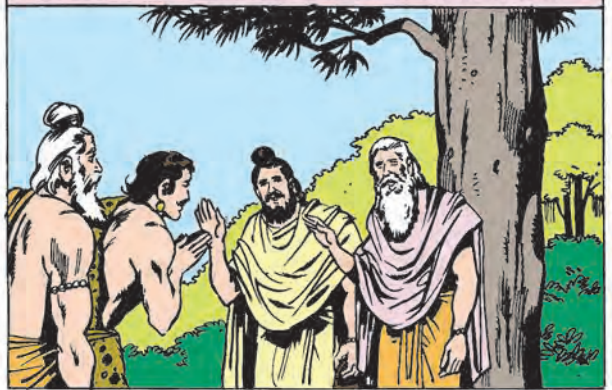
IN THE TWELFTH YEAR OF THEIR EXILE IN THE FOREST, O MONARCH, THE PANDAVAS ENGAGED IN ASCETICISM AND DEVOTED TO THE PRACTICE OF ARCHERY, REACHED THE DWAITA LAKE AND WOODS.



"THE PANDAVAS LIVED NEAR THE DWAITA LAKE, FAR AWAY FROM CIVILIZATION ...



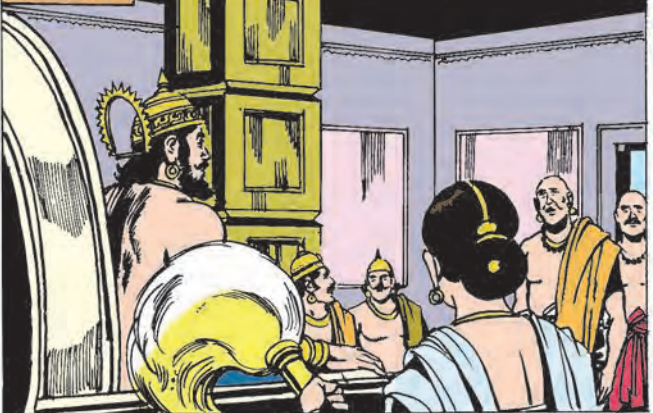
"...BUT MANY ASCETICS CAME TO VISIT THEM.

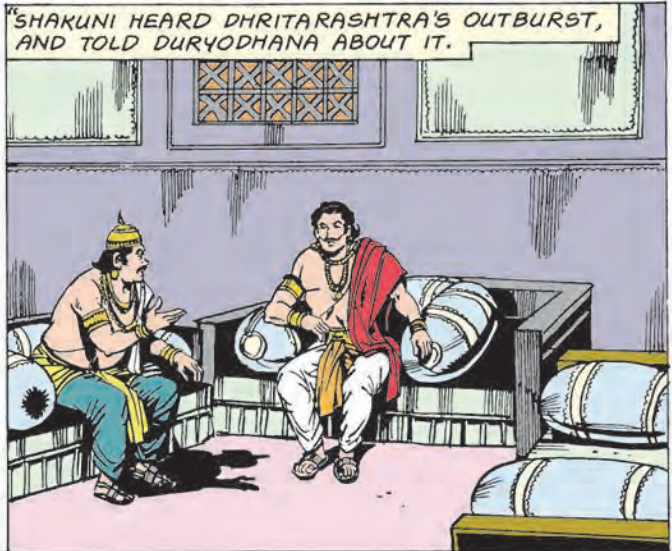
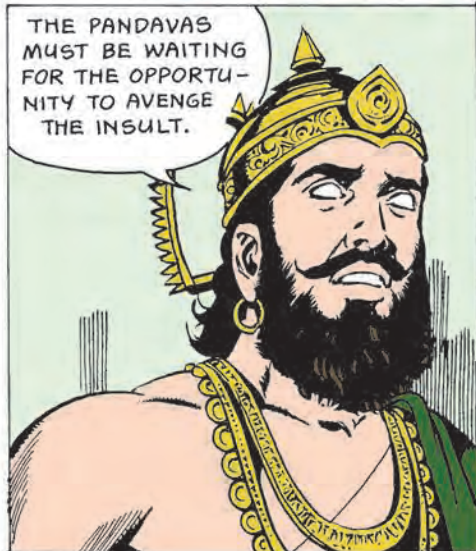
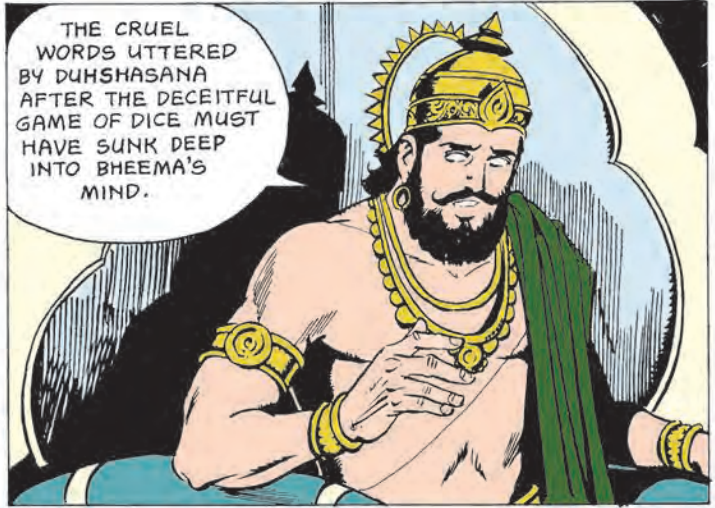
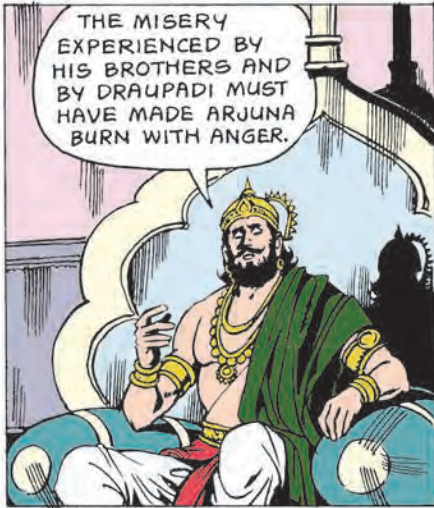
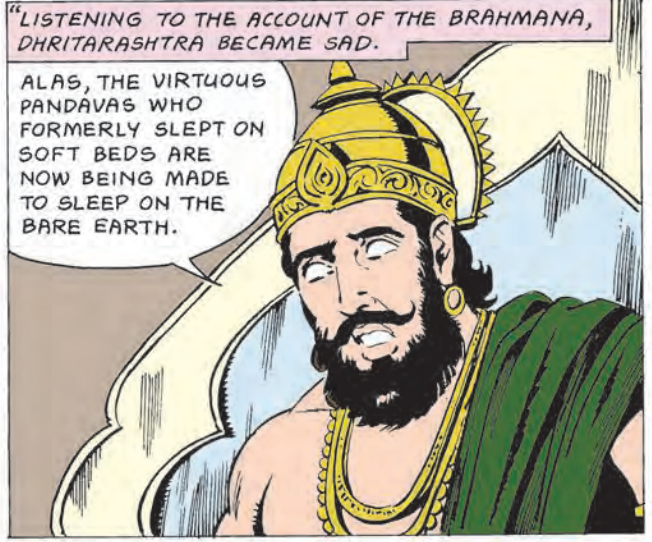
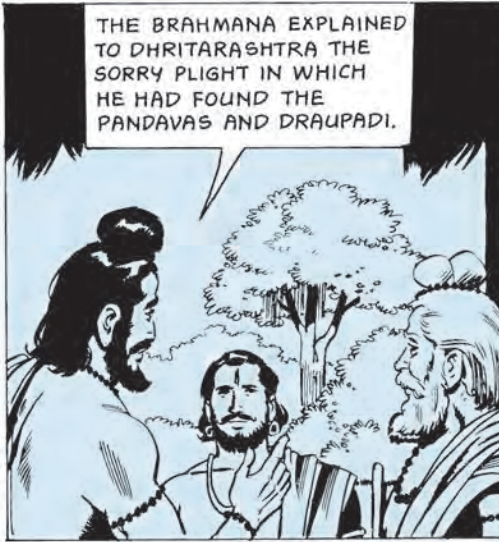


"ONE DAY THERE CAME TO THE DWAITA FOREST A CERTAIN BRAHMANA. HE CONVERSED WITH THE PANDAVAS FOR A WHILE ...



"...AND THEN VISITED THE COURT OF KING DHRITA-RASHTRA.





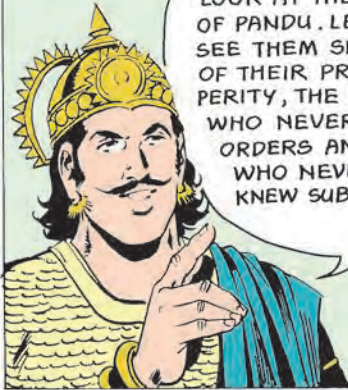
"WHAT HIS FATHER HAD SPOKEN FILLED DURYODHANA WITH GRIEF. SHAKUNI AND KARNA TRIED TO CONSOLE HIM."

O DURYODHANA!
HAVING EXILED THE
PANDAVAS BY YOUR OWN
PROWESS, RULE THIS
EARTH WITHOUT A RIVAL.
ALL THE KINGS OF THIS
LAND WILL NOW CARRY OUT
YOUR COMMANDS IN THE
SAME MANNER AS THEY
DID UNDER YUDHISH-
THIRA.



"THEN KARNA SAID —

O KING, LET
US GO TO THE
DWAITAVANA AND
LOOK AT THE SONS
OF PANDU. LET US
SEE THEM SHORN
OF THEIR PROS-
PERITY, THE ONES
WHO NEVER TOOK
ORDERS AND
WHO NEVER
KNEW SUBJECTION.



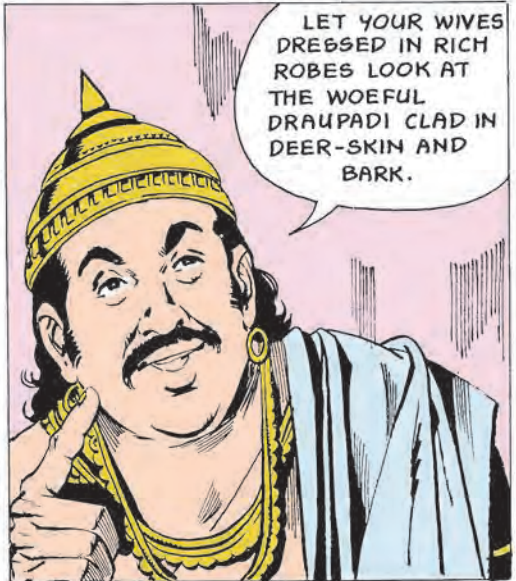
WHO CAN BE A HAPPIER
MAN THAN HE, WHO, IN PROS-
PERITY, CAN LOOK DOWN ON HIS
FOES IN ADVERSITY? O KING, THE
HAPPINESS THAT ONE DERIVES
FROM BEHOLDING HIS FOES IN
GRIEF IS GREAT...



...IT IS GREAT-
ER THAN WHAT ONE
MAY DERIVE FROM THE
ACQUISITION OF A SON
OR IMMENSE WEALTH
OR A KINGDOM.

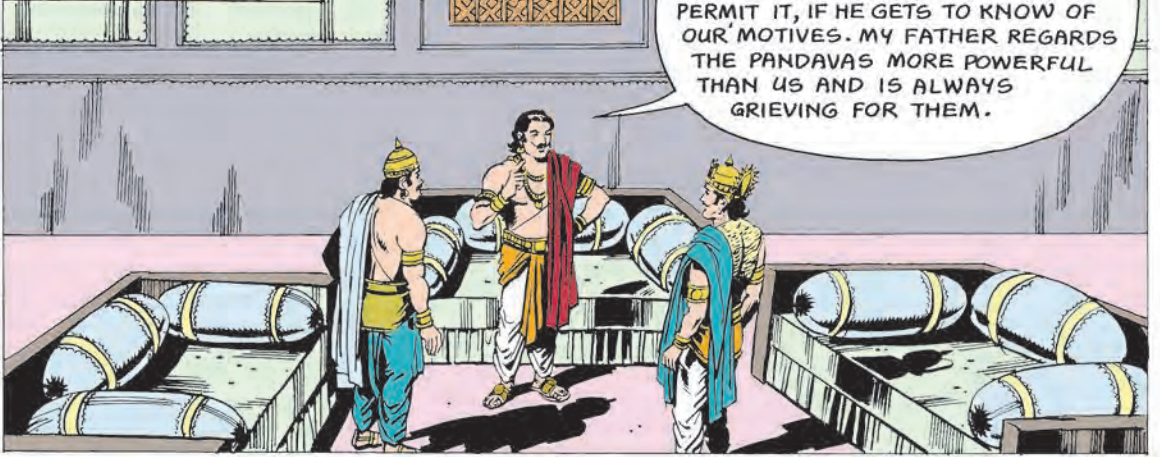


LET YOUR WIVES
DRESSED IN RICH
ROBES LOOK AT
THE WOEFUL
DRAUPADI CLAD IN
DEER-SKIN AND
BARK.



"HEARING SHAKUNI SPEAK THUS, DURYODHANA WAS VERY PLEASED, BUT WAS SOON OVERCOME BY MELANCHOLY. HE SAID —

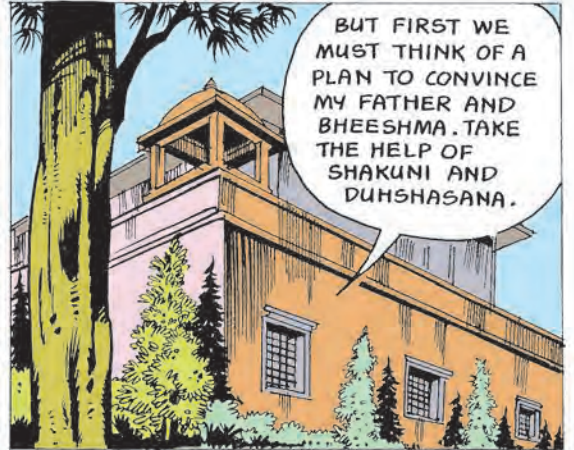
O KARNA ! I TOO HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT YOU SAY. HOWEVER, KING DHRITARASHTRA WILL NEVER PERMIT IT, IF HE GETS TO KNOW OF OUR MOTIVES. MY FATHER REGARDS THE PANDAVAS MORE POWERFUL THAN US AND IS ALWAYS GRIEVING FOR THEM.



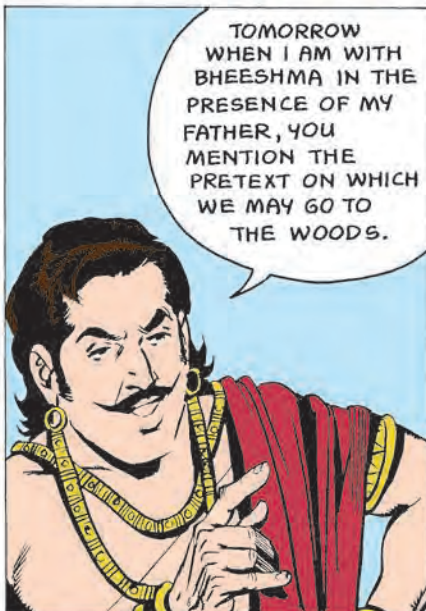
I CANNOT MAKE UP MY MIND AS TO WHETHER I SHOULD GO OR NOT ! I WILL CERTAINLY BE PLEASED TO CAST MY EYES ON THE PANDAVAS AND DRAUPADI AS THEY PASS THEIR DAYS IN PAIN AND SORROW.



BUT FIRST WE MUST THINK OF A PLAN TO CONVINCE MY FATHER AND BHEESHMA. TAKE THE HELP OF SHAKUNI AND DUSHASANA.

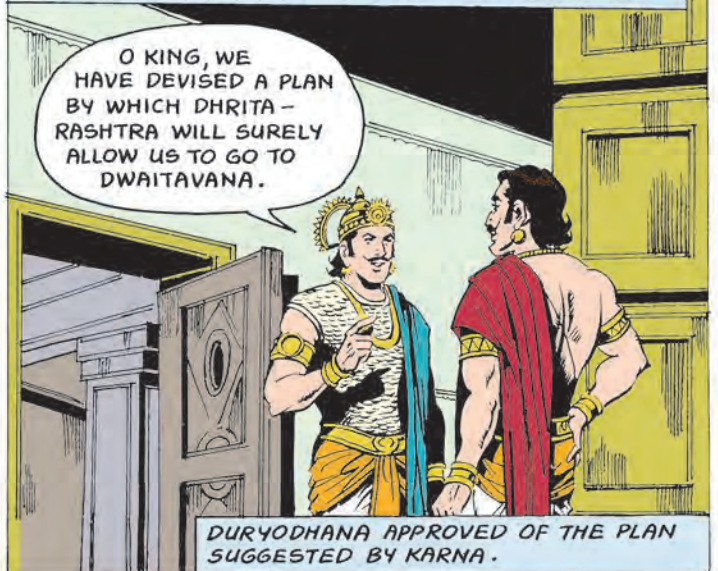


TOMORROW WHEN I AM WITH BHEESHMA IN THE PRESENCE OF MY FATHER, YOU MENTION THE PRETEXT ON WHICH WE MAY GO TO THE WOODS.



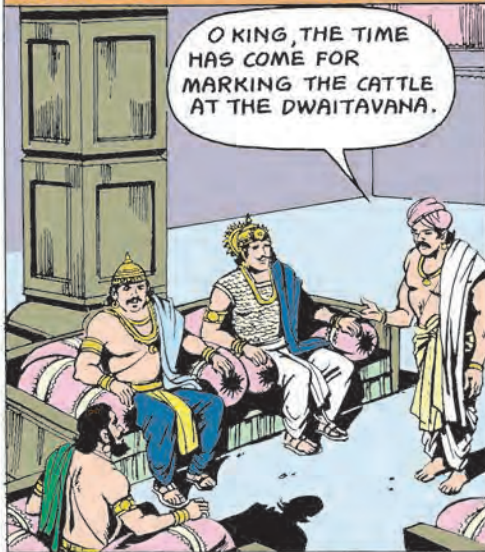
"THAT NIGHT KARNA WENT TO MEET DURYODHANA.

O KING, WE HAVE DEVISED A PLAN BY WHICH DHRITARASHTRA WILL SURELY ALLOW US TO GO TO DWAITAVANA.



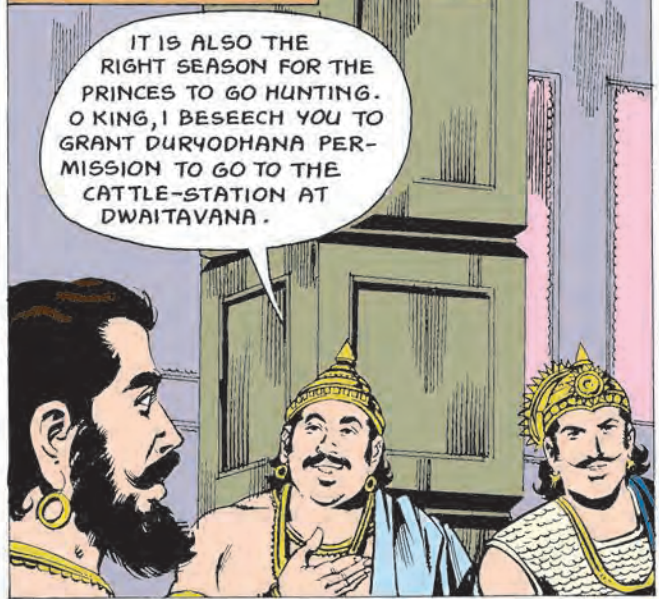
DURYODHANA APPROVED OF THE PLAN SUGGESTED BY KARNA.

"NEXT DAY, INSTRUCTED BY KARNA AND SHAKUNI, SAMANGA, A COWHERD, APPROACHED DHRTIRASHTRA."

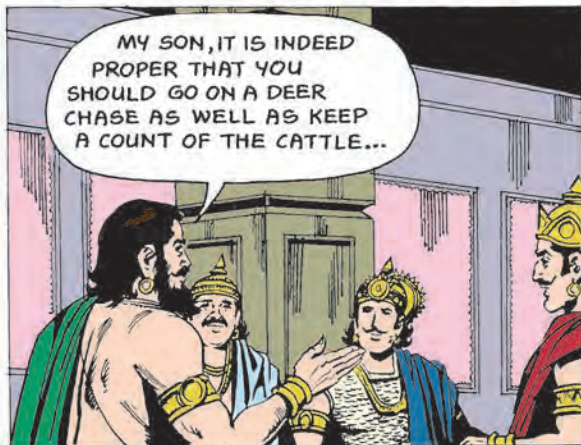


O KING, THE TIME HAS COME FOR MARKING THE CATTLE AT THE DWAITAVANA.

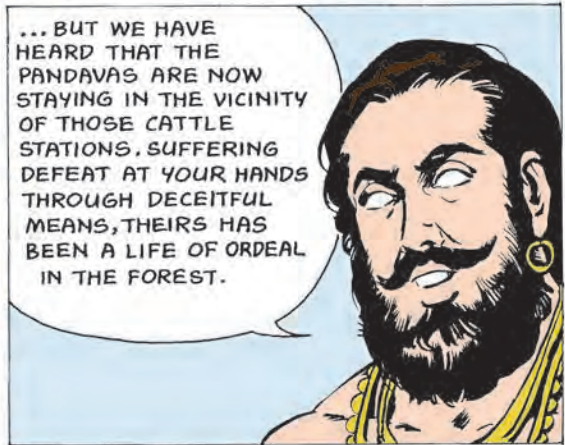
"THEN SHAKUNI SAID —



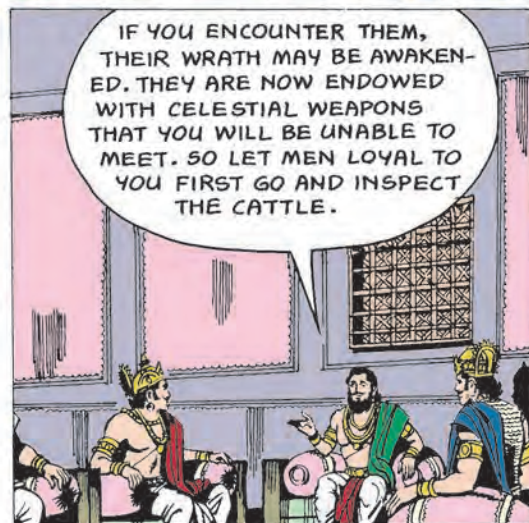
IT IS ALSO THE RIGHT SEASON FOR THE PRINCES TO GO HUNTING. O KING, I BESEECH YOU TO GRANT DURYODHANA PERMISSION TO GO TO THE CATTLE-STATION AT DWAITAVANA.



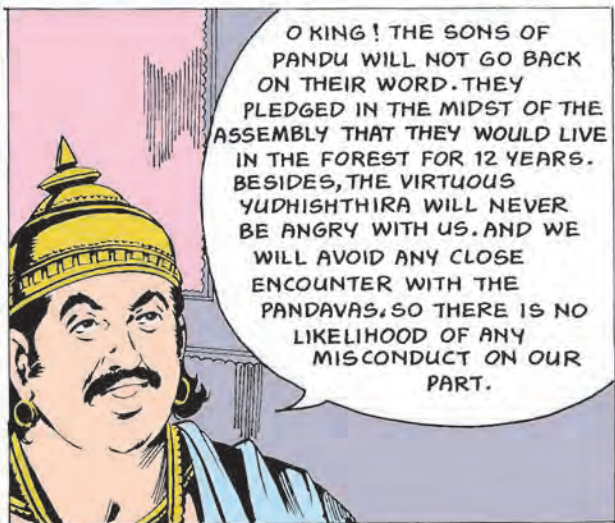
MY SON, IT IS INDEED PROPER THAT YOU SHOULD GO ON A DEER CHASE AS WELL AS KEEP A COUNT OF THE CATTLE...



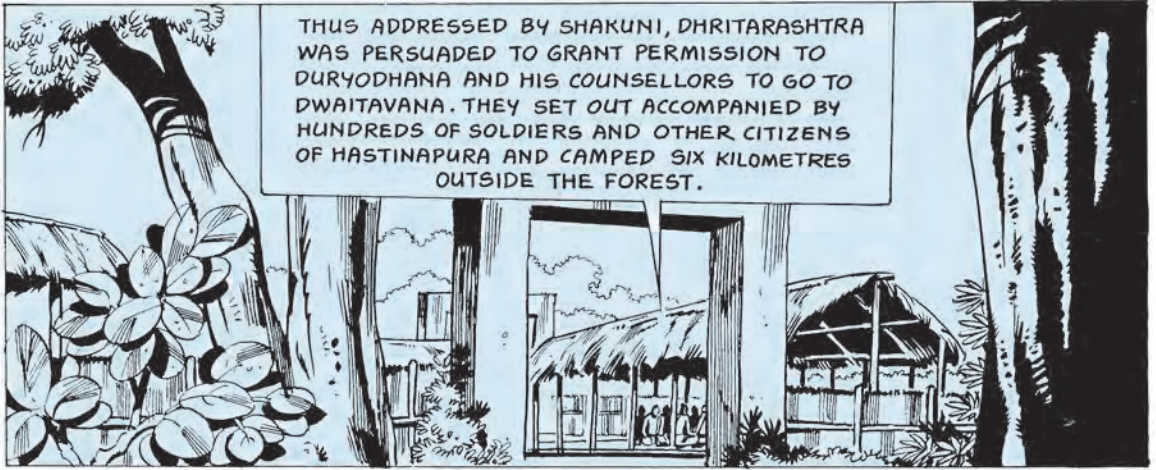
... BUT WE HAVE HEARD THAT THE PANDAVAS ARE NOW STAYING IN THE VICINITY OF THOSE CATTLE STATIONS. SUFFERING DEFEAT AT YOUR HANDS THROUGH DECEITFUL MEANS, THEIRS HAS BEEN A LIFE OF ORDEAL IN THE FOREST.



IF YOU ENCOUNTER THEM, THEIR WRATH MAY BE AWAKENED. THEY ARE NOW ENDOWED WITH CELESTIAL WEAPONS THAT YOU WILL BE UNABLE TO MEET. SO LET MEN LOYAL TO YOU FIRST GO AND INSPECT THE CATTLE.



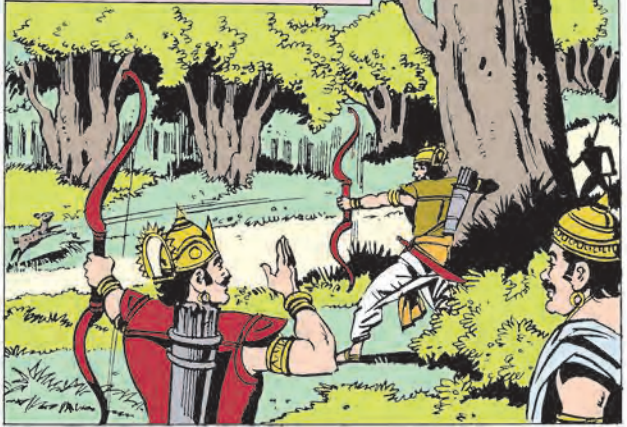
O KING! THE SONS OF PANDU WILL NOT GO BACK ON THEIR WORD. THEY PLEDGED IN THE MIDST OF THE ASSEMBLY THAT THEY WOULD LIVE IN THE FOREST FOR 12 YEARS. BESIDES, THE VIRTUOUS YUDHISHTHIRA WILL NEVER BE ANGRY WITH US. AND WE WILL AVOID ANY CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH THE PANDAVAS, SO THERE IS NO LIKELIHOOD OF ANY MISCONDUCT ON OUR PART.



"HAVING SET UP CAMP, DURYODHANA SPENT SOME TIME IN CONDUCTING A CENSUS OF THE CATTLE.



"THEN HE AND HIS FOLLOWERS CONCENTRATED ON THE GAME OF HUNTING.



"THE PANDAVAS, OBLIVIOUS OF THE INTRUDERS, NOT SO FAR AWAY FROM THE FOREST, CONTINUED WITH THEIR DAILY SACRIFICES.



"ONE DAY SOME OF DURYODHANA'S MEN STRAYED INTO THE FOREST. SUDDENLY—



"THE MEN FROM HASTINAPURA WERE THUS FORCED TO RETURN TO THEIR CAMP.



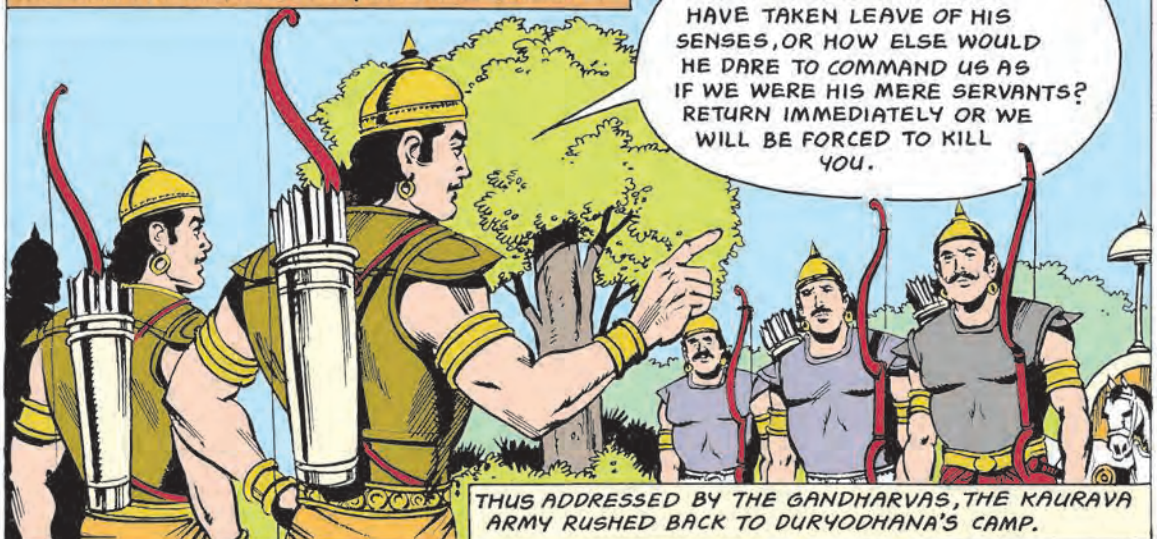
"DURYODHANA AT ONCE DESPATCHED A BAND OF ABLE SOLDIERS TO SETTLE THE MATTER.



"THE SOLDIERS WENT BACK TO THE WOODS AND ADDRESSED THE GANDHARVAS.



"THE GANDHARVAS, HOWEVER, LAUGHED AND SAID:



THUS ADDRESSED BY THE GANDHARVAS, THE KAURAVA ARMY RUSHED BACK TO DURYODHANA'S CAMP.

"DURYODHANA WAS FILLED WITH RAGE WHEN THE MATTER WAS REPORTED TO HIM.



"THE KURU SOLDIERS THUS MARCHED INTO DWAITAVANA DISREGARDING THE GANDHARVAS.



"THE GANDHARVA WARRIORS RUSHED TO THEIR KING CHITRASENA FOR ADVICE.



"THE GANDHARVAS RETURNED IN FULL FORCE AND RUSHED AT THE KAURAVA SOLDIERS HOLDING UP THEIR WEAPONS.



"THE KAURAVA SOLDIERS WERE OVERPOWERED.



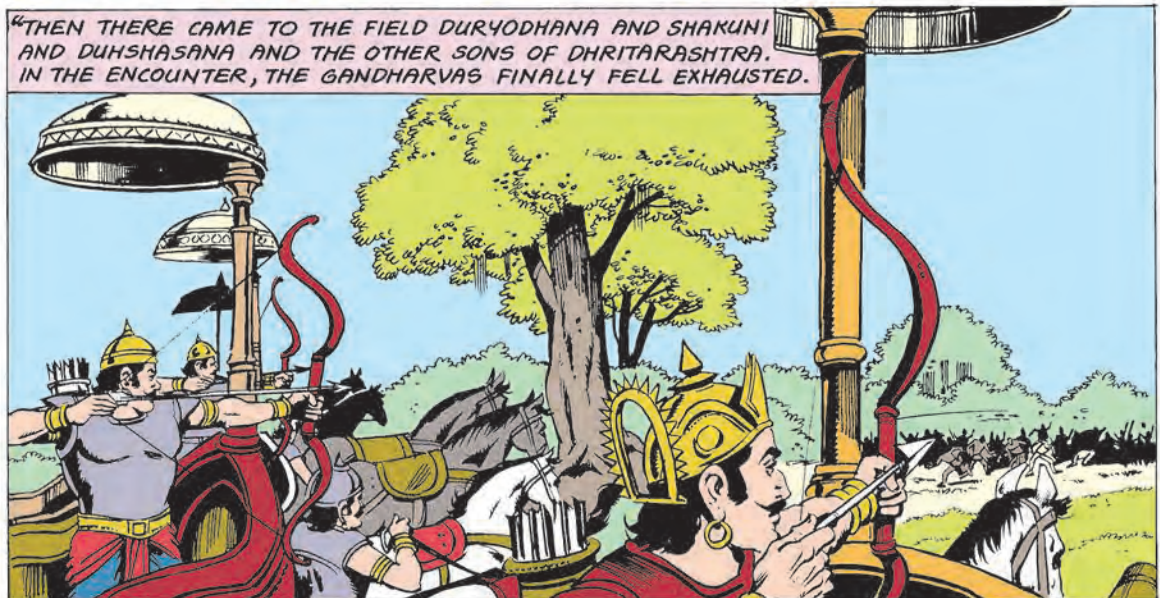
"KARNA WAS UNHAPPY WHEN HE SAW THE KURU SOLDIERS DESERTING THE FIELD. WITH A SHOWER OF ARROWS HE TRIED TO CHECK THE ADVANCE OF THE GANDHARVAS."



"HUNDREDS OF GANDHARVAS FELL TO KARNA'S SHARP ARROWS."



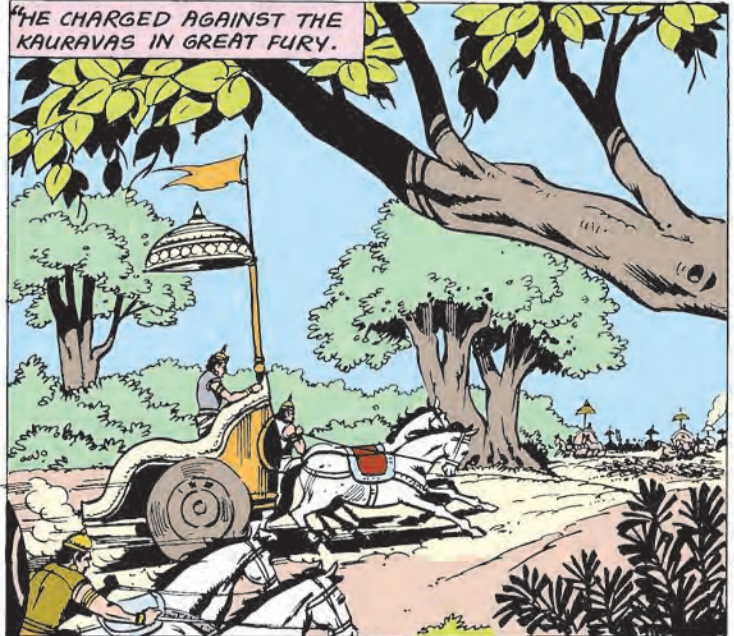
"THEN THERE CAME TO THE FIELD DURYODHANA AND SHAKUNI AND DUHSHASANA AND THE OTHER SONS OF DHRTIRASHTRA. IN THE ENCOUNTER, THE GANDHARVAS FINALLY FELL EXHAUSTED."



SEEING THE GANDHARVAS
YIELDING TO FEAR,
CHITRASENA, ROUSED
TO ANGER, SPRANG FROM
HIS SEAT, AND RESOLVED
TO EXTERMINATE THE
KURU ARMY.



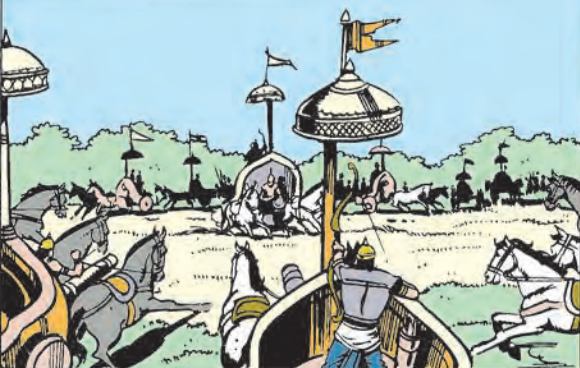
HE CHARGED AGAINST THE
KAURAVAS IN GREAT FURY.



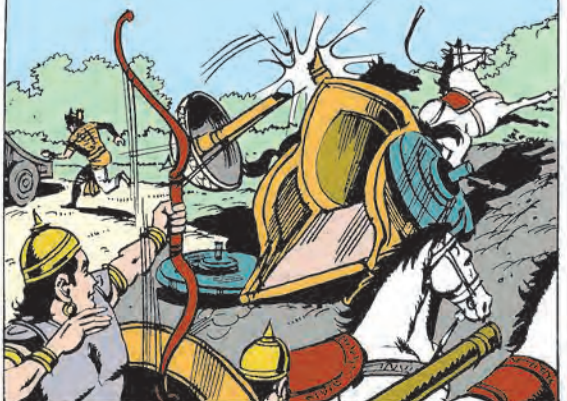
THE GANDHARVA KING HAD MAGIC POWERS AND HE UNLEASHED
THEM ON THE KAURAVA SOLDIERS. THEY BECAME BEWITCHED AND
FLED THE FIELD.



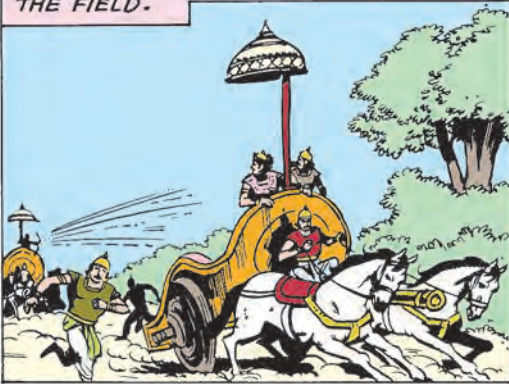
AFTER THE KURUS HAD FLED, THE
GANDHARVAS TURNED TO KARNA WHO
CONTINUED TO BATTLE. THEY
SURROUNDED HIM...



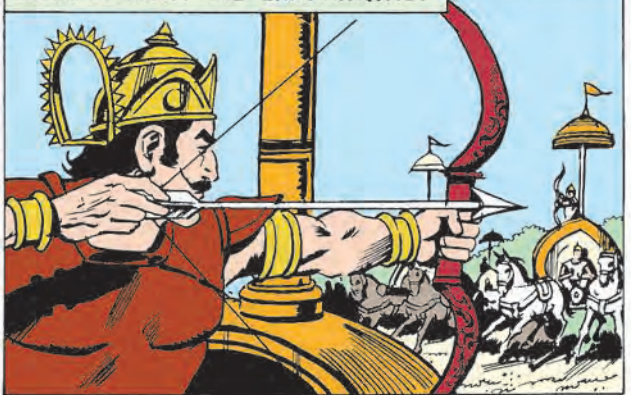
... FORCED HIM TO GET OFF HIS CHARIOT
AND THEN DESTROYED IT.



"KARNA LEAPT ON TO ANOTHER CHARIOT BUT HE COULD NOT KEEP UP FOR LONG AND WITHDREW FROM THE FIELD."



"BEHOLDING ALL HIS LOYAL FOLLOWERS FLEEING, DURYODHANA WAS MORE DETERMINED THAN EVER TO FIGHT THE GANDHARVAS."



"BUT SOON THE GANDHARVAS SURROUNDED DURYODHANA'S CHARIOT AND FORCED HIM TO THE GROUND."



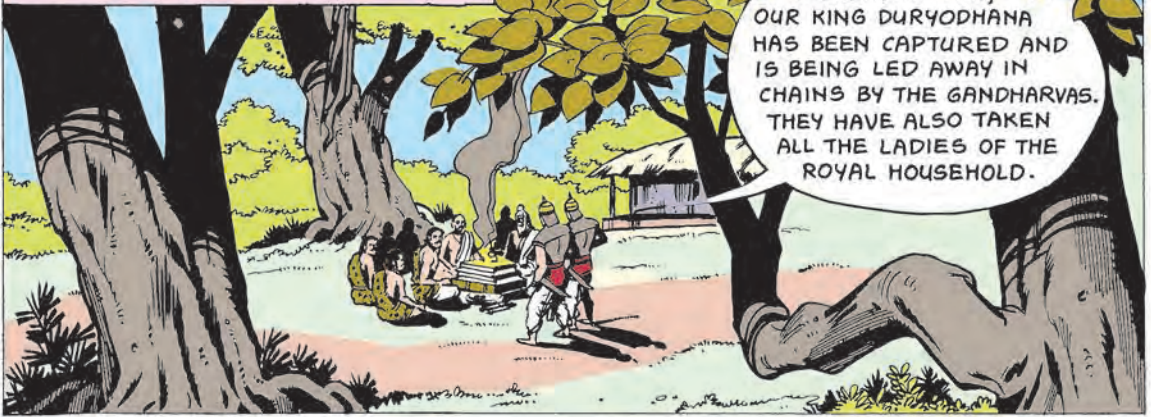
"THEN CHITRASENA RUSHED FORWARD AND SEIZED HIM."



"DURYODHANA, DUHSHASANA AND A HOST OF OTHER KAURAVAS WERE TAKEN PRISONERS BY THE GANDHARVAS."



"SEEING DURYODHANA BEING TAKEN CAPTIVE, SOME OF HIS MEN APPROACHED THE PANDAVAS



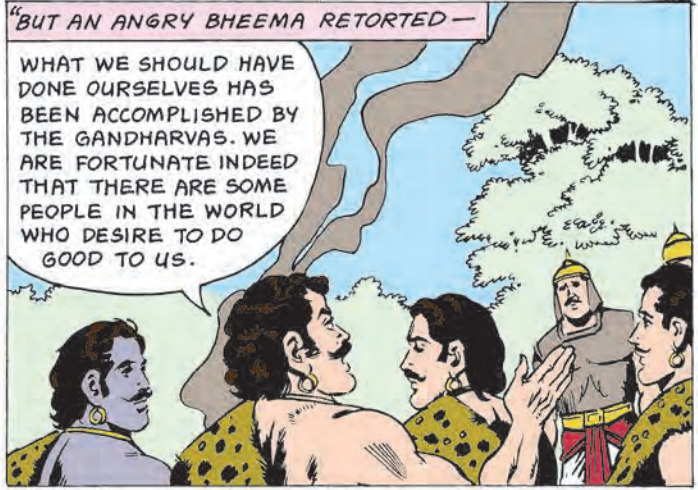
O YUDHISHTHIRA,
OUR KING DURYODHANA
HAS BEEN CAPTURED AND
IS BEING LED AWAY IN
CHAINS BY THE GANDHARVAS.
THEY HAVE ALSO TAKEN
ALL THE LADIES OF THE
ROYAL HOUSEHOLD.

O YUDHISHTHIRA,
PLEASE COME TO OUR
RESCUE! RELEASE
OUR KING AND OUR
BROTHERS FROM THE
GANDHARVAS.

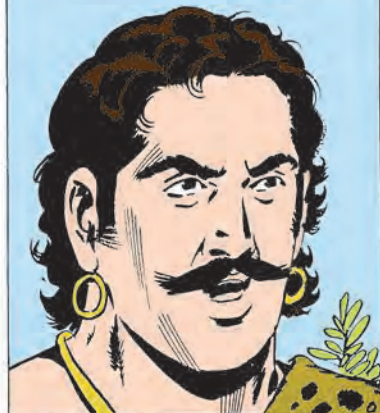


"BUT AN ANGRY BHEEMA RETORTED —

WHAT WE SHOULD HAVE
DONE OURSELVES HAS
BEEN ACCOMPLISHED BY
THE GANDHARVAS. WE
ARE FORTUNATE INDEED
THAT THERE ARE SOME
PEOPLE IN THE WORLD
WHO DESIRE TO DO
GOOD TO US.

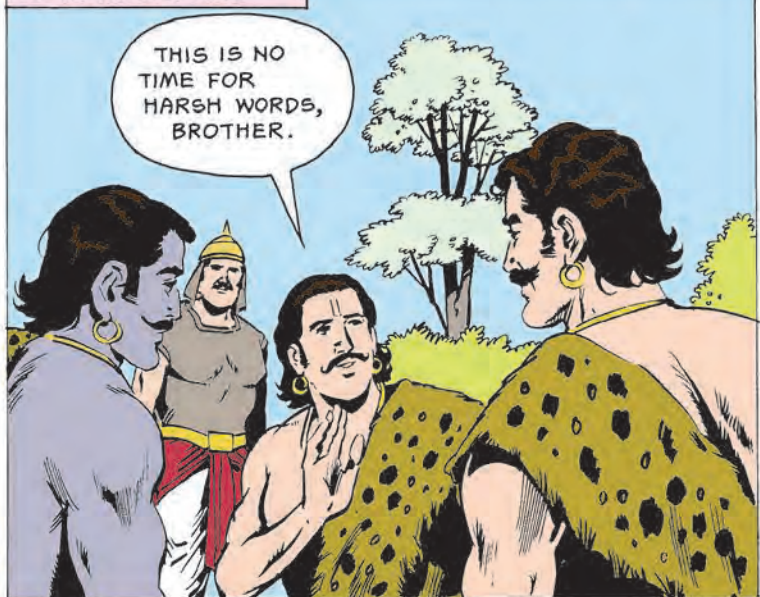


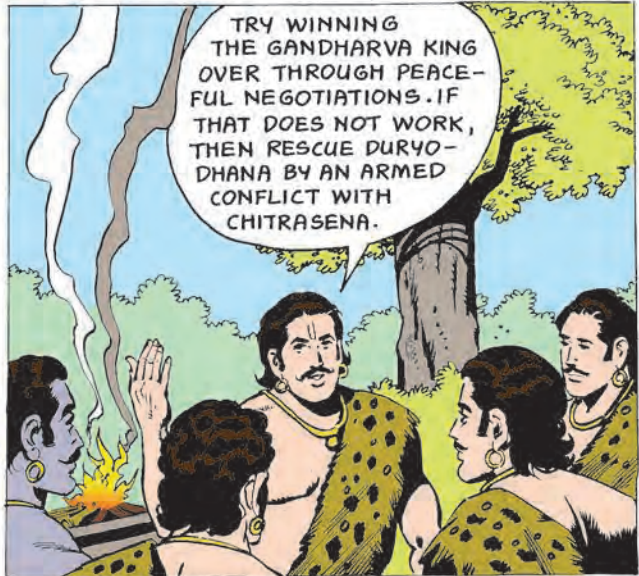
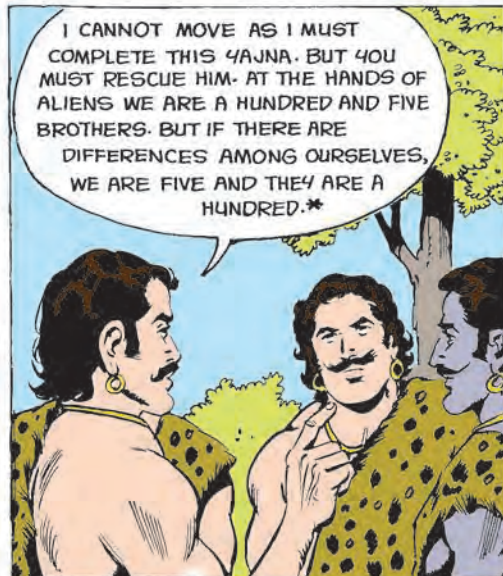
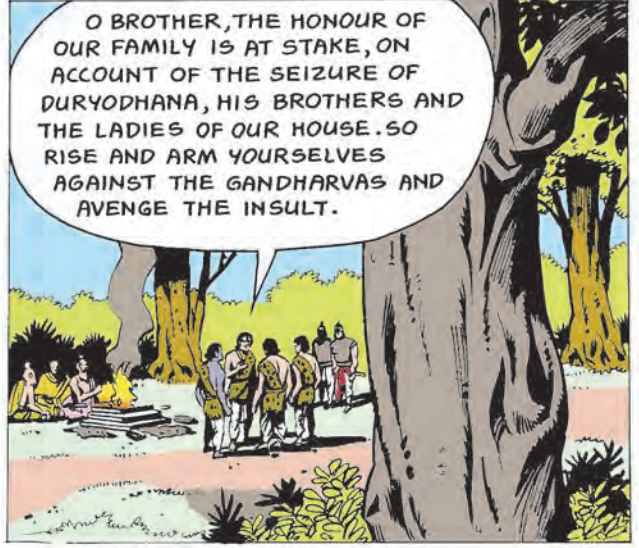
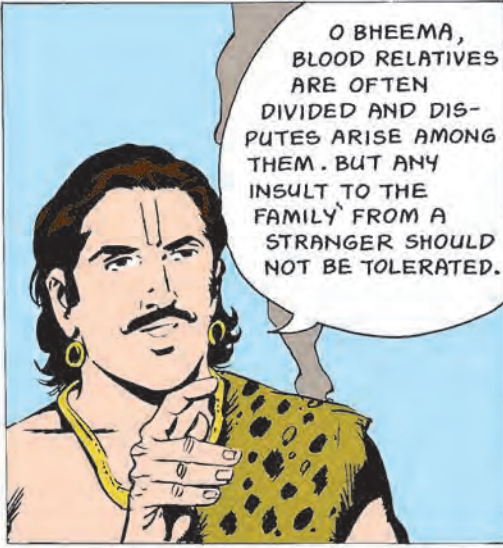
DURYODHANA IS AN
EVIL MAN. HE WANTS
TO SEE US SUFFER
AS HE ENJOYS
HIMSELF ON THE
THRONE.



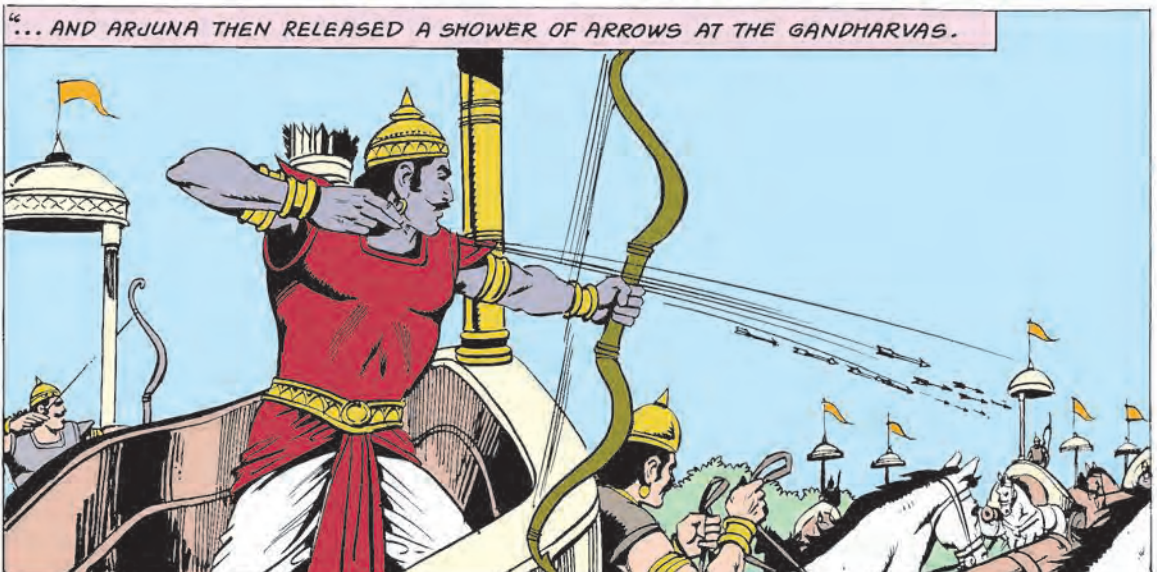
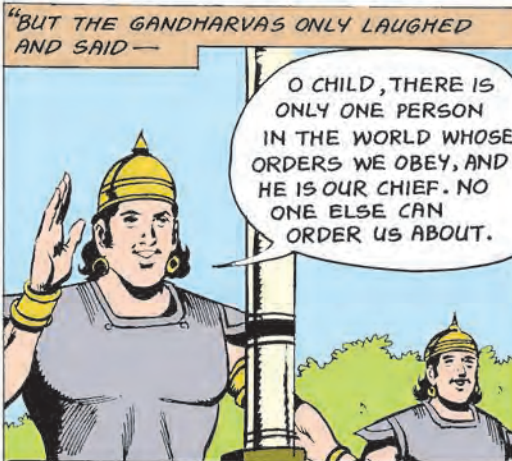
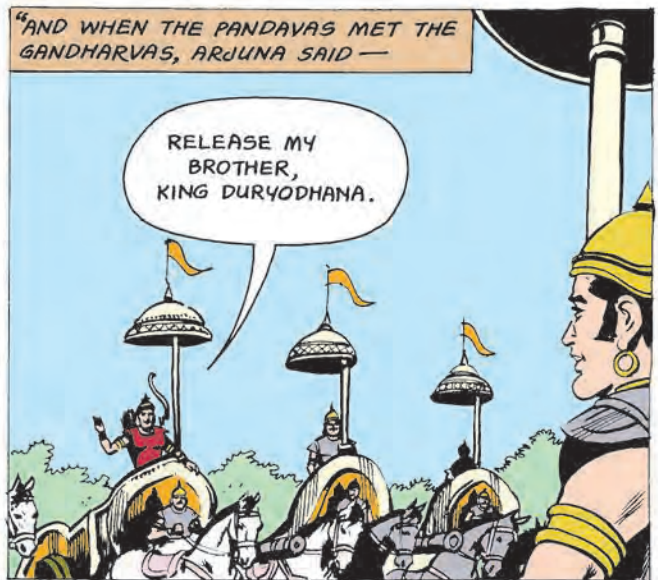
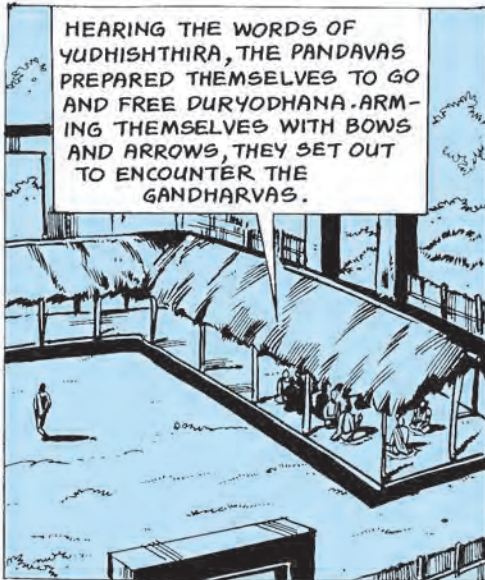
"YUDHISHTHIRA SAID —

THIS IS NO
TIME FOR
HARSH WORDS,
BROTHER.





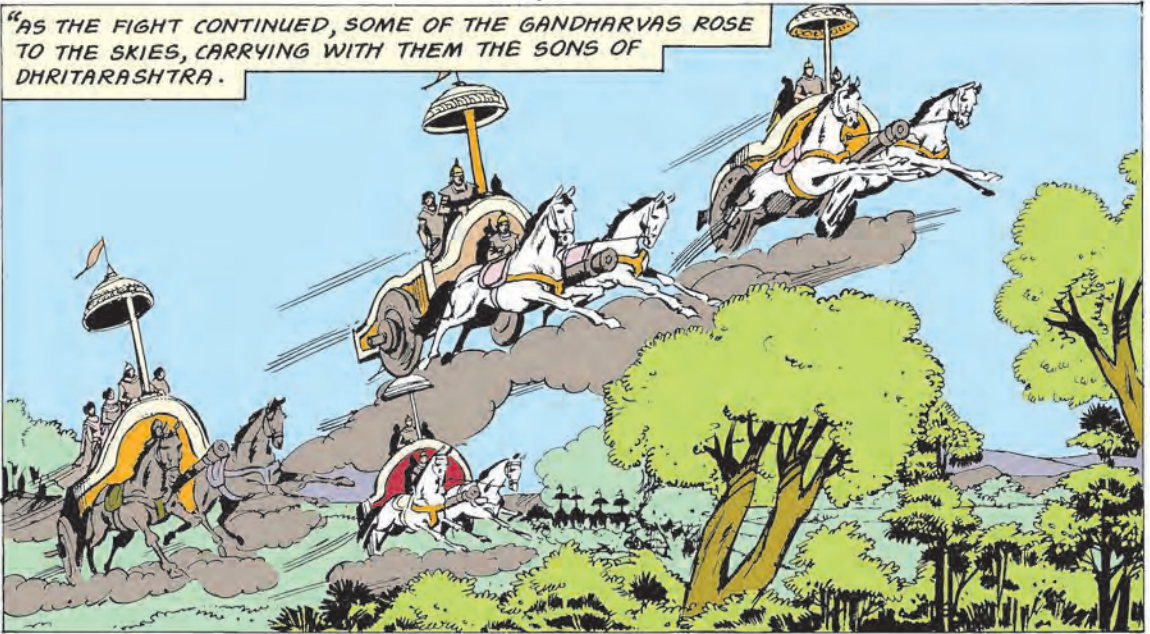
* परैः परिभवे प्राप्ते वयं पंचोत्तरं ज्ञातम्, परस्परविरोधे तु वयं पंच ज्ञातं तु ते!



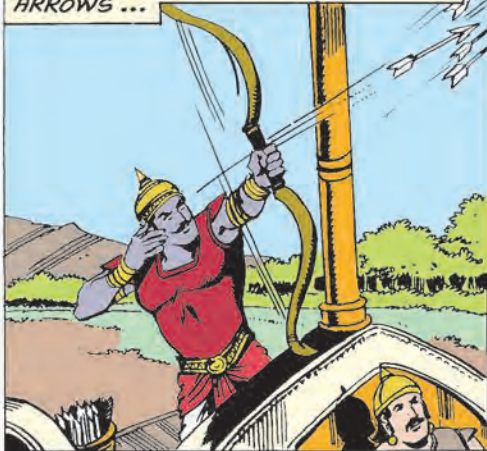
"THE FOUR PANDAVAS FOUGHT AGAINST THE GANDHARVA HORDES.
ARJUNA SLEW THEM BY THE HUNDREDS WITH HIS CELESTIAL WEAPONS."



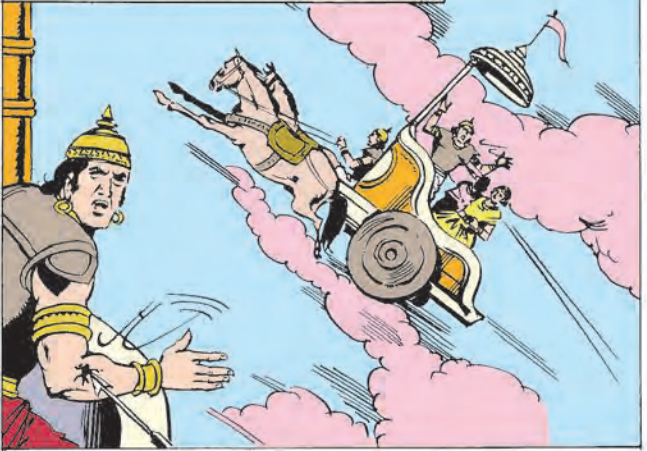
"AS THE FIGHT CONTINUED, SOME OF THE GANDHARVAS ROSE TO THE SKIES, CARRYING WITH THEM THE SONS OF DHRTARASHTRA."



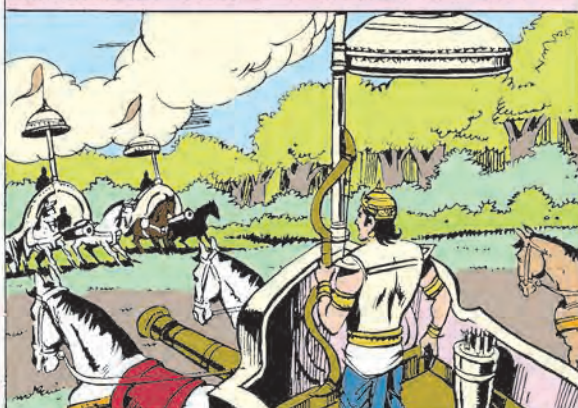
"BEHOLDING THIS, ARJUNA COVERED THE SKIES WITH A SHOWER OF ARROWS ..."



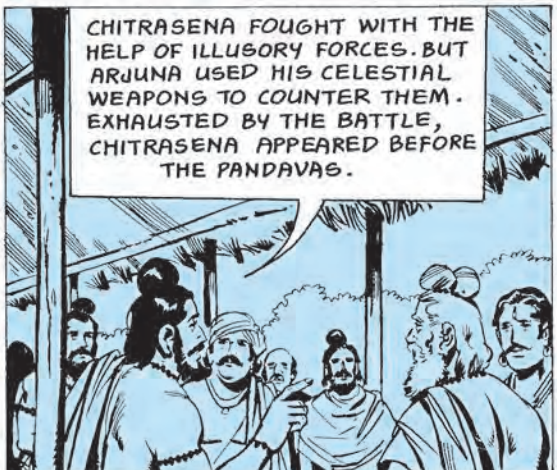
"... KILLING A LARGE NUMBER OF GANDHARVAS AND CAUSING PANIC AMONG THEM."



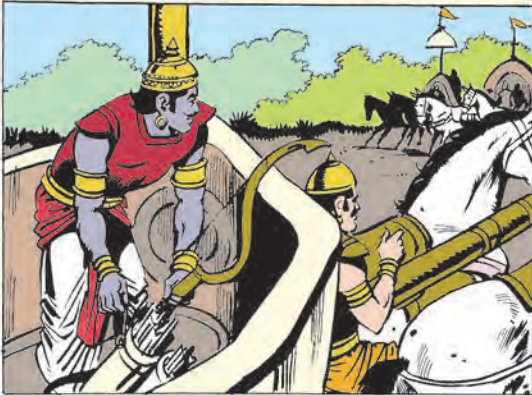
"REALISING THE DAMAGE DONE TO HIS FORCES, CHITRASENA RUSHED TO ATTACK ARJUNA."



CHITRASENA FOUGHT WITH THE HELP OF ILLUSORY FORCES. BUT ARJUNA USED HIS CELESTIAL WEAPONS TO COUNTER THEM. EXHAUSTED BY THE BATTLE, CHITRASENA APPEARED BEFORE THE PANDAVAS.



"REMEMBERING HOW CHITRASENA HAD BEFRIENDED HIM AT THE ABODE OF INDRA, ARJUNA WITHDREW HIS WEAPONS."

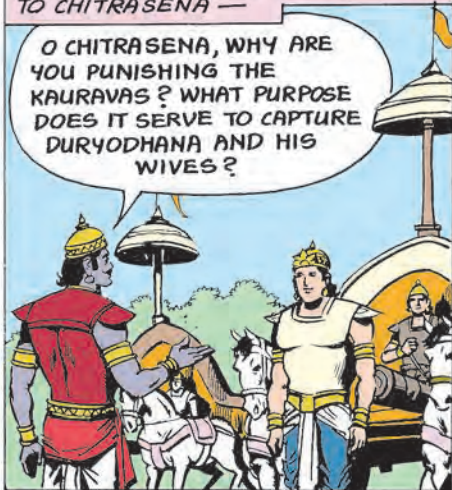


"SOON THE OTHER SONS OF PANDU TOO WITHDREW THEIR BOWS AND CHECKED THEIR RACING STEEDS."

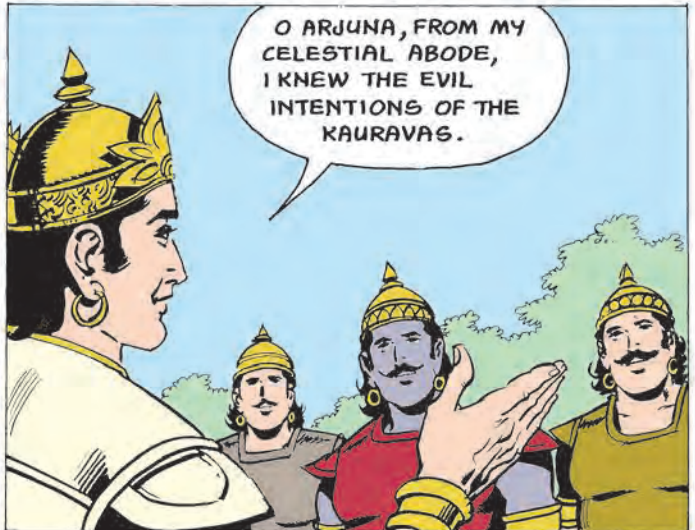


"ARJUNA THEN SMILINGLY SAID TO CHITRASENA —

O CHITRASENA, WHY ARE YOU PUNISHING THE KAURAVAS? WHAT PURPOSE DOES IT SERVE TO CAPTURE DURYODHANA AND HIS WIVES?

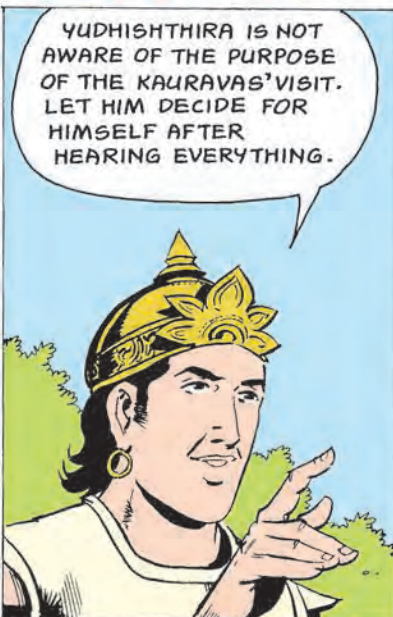
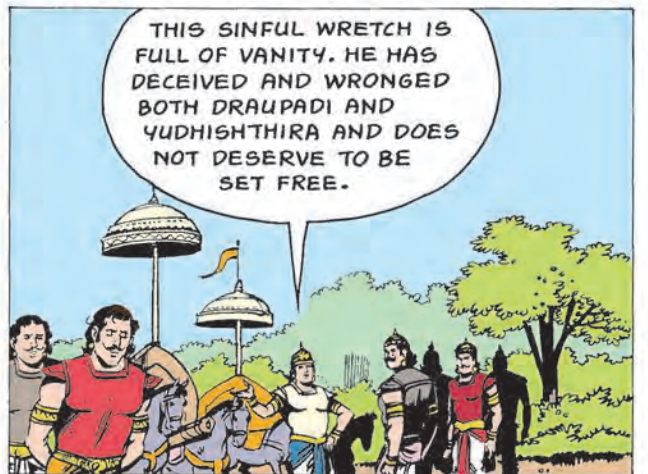
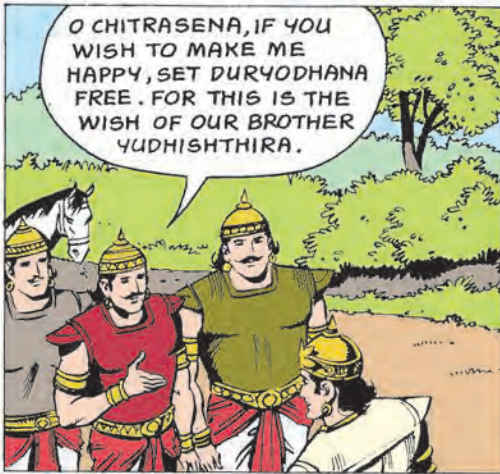
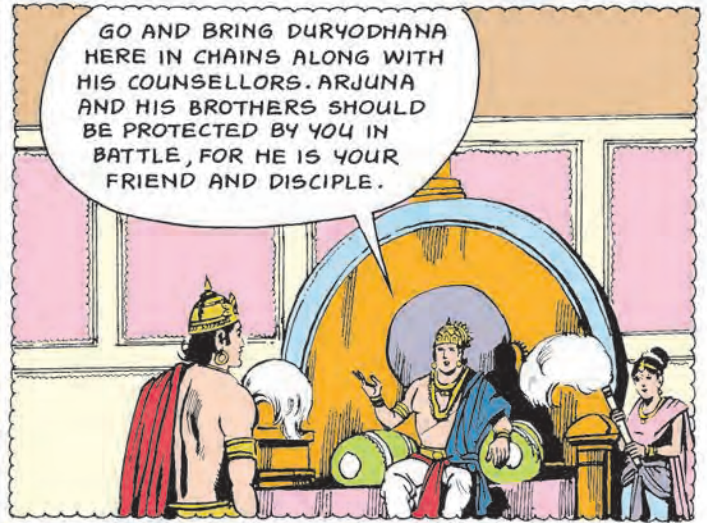


O ARJUNA, FROM MY CELESTIAL ABODE, I KNEW THE EVIL INTENTIONS OF THE KAURAVAS.

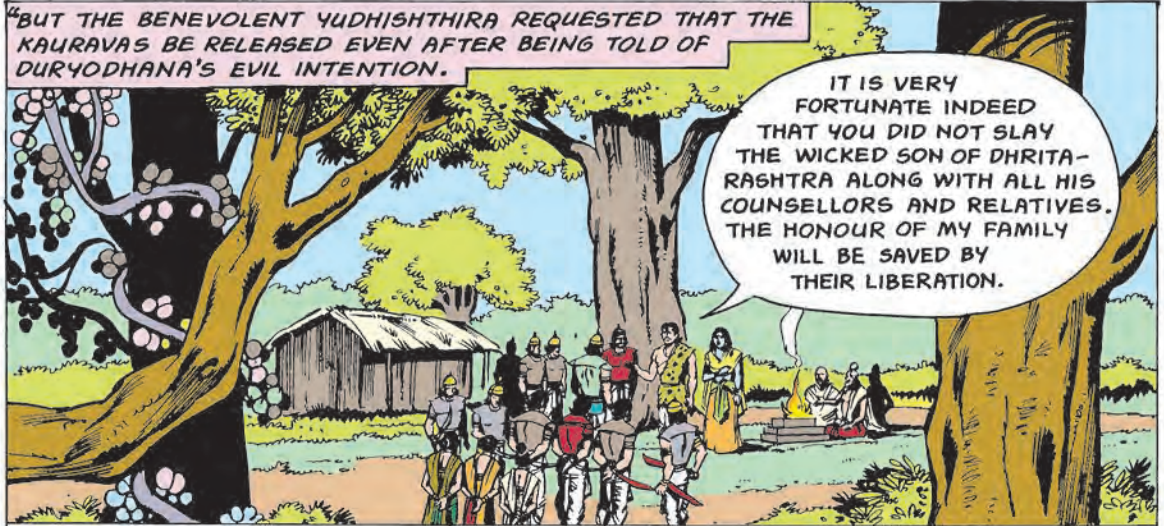


I KNEW THAT THEY HAD COME TO THIS FOREST TO MOCK AT YOU AND YOUR BROTHERS AND THE FAIR DRAUPADI PLUNGED IN MISFORTUNE AND ADVERSITY.

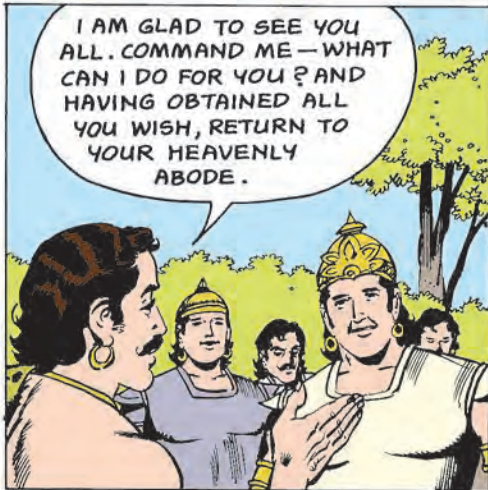




"BUT THE BENEVOLENT YUDHISHTHIRA REQUESTED THAT THE KAURAVAS BE RELEASED EVEN AFTER BEING TOLD OF DURYODHANA'S EVIL INTENTION."



I AM GLAD TO SEE YOU ALL. COMMAND ME — WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU ? AND HAVING OBTAINED ALL YOU WISH, RETURN TO YOUR HEAVENLY ABODE .



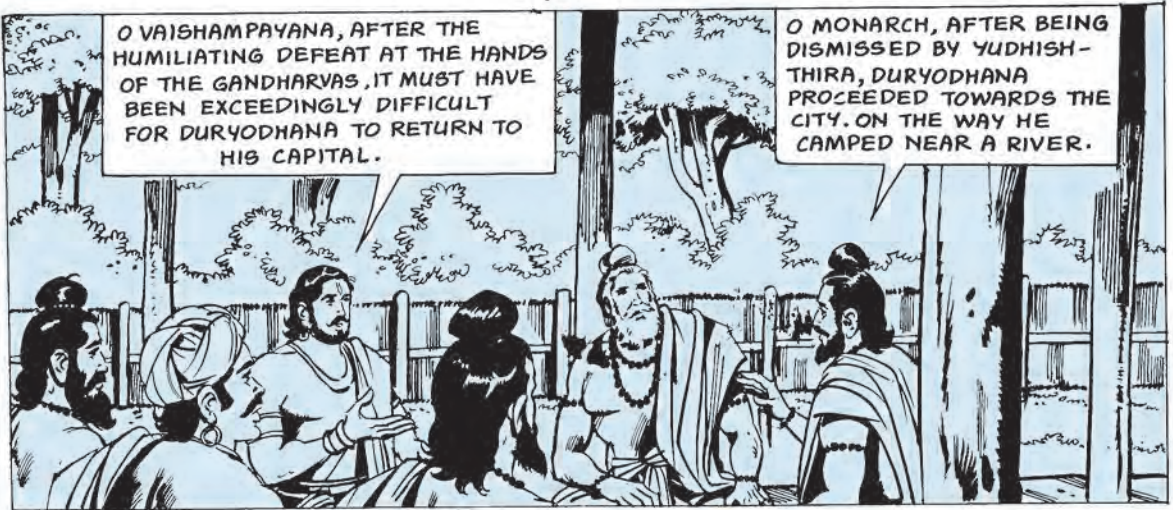
"THE GANDHARVAS RELEASED THE KAURAVAS AND DEPARTED."



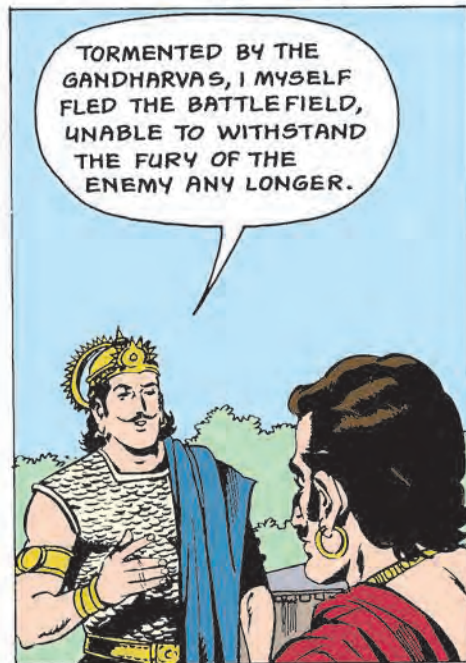
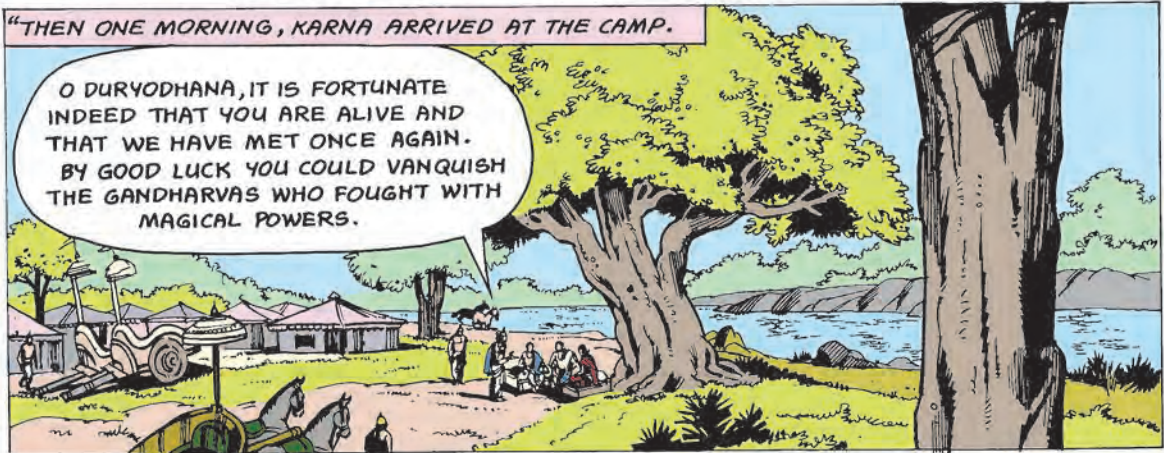
"AND YUDHISHTHIRA ADDRESSED THE LIBERATED DURYODHANA IN AN AFFECTIONATE VOICE —

O CHILD, NEVER AGAIN COMMIT SUCH A RASH ACT, FOR YOU CAN NEVER ATTAIN HAPPINESS THEN. NOW YOU AND YOUR BROTHERS GO BACK TO THE CAPITAL CHEERFULLY .





"THEN ONE MORNING, KARNA ARRIVED AT THE CAMP.



"IN A VOICE CHOKED WITH EMOTION DURYODHANA SAID —

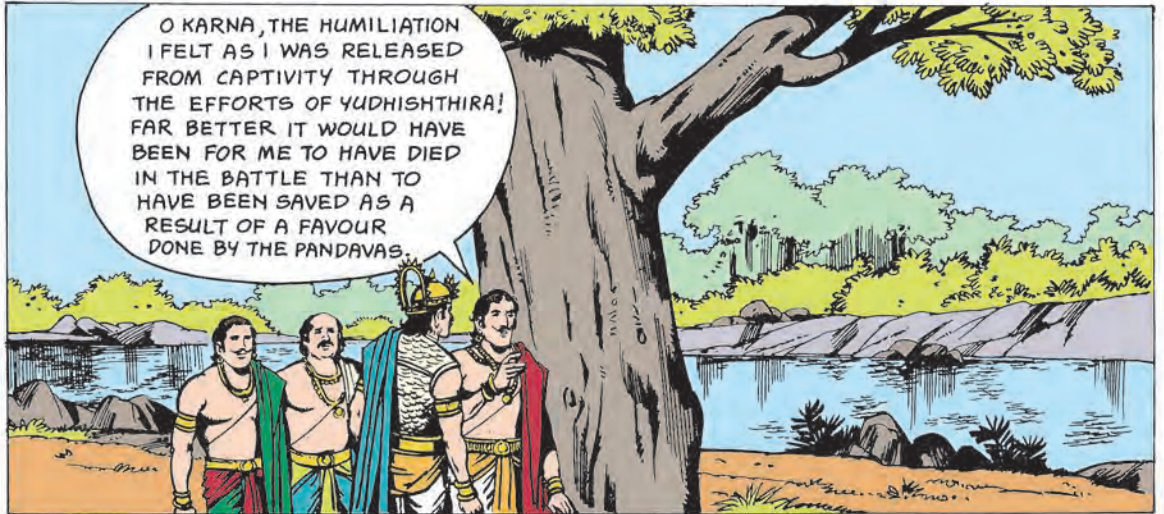
O KARNA, YOU DO NOT KNOW WHAT HAPPENED.



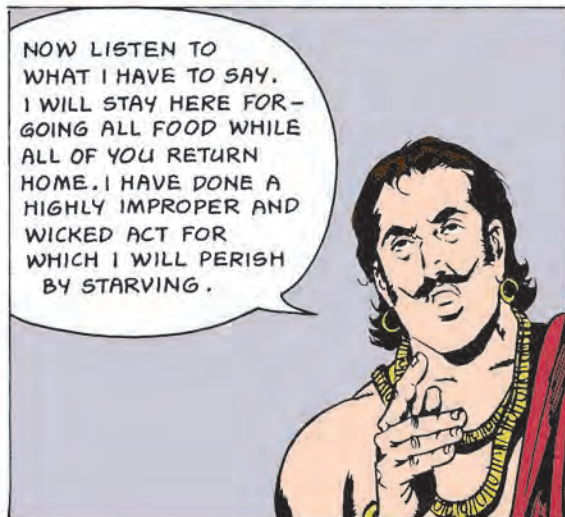
DURYODHANA THEN EXPLAINED TO KARNA ALL THAT HAD TAKEN PLACE AFTER THE PANDAVAS HAD DECIDED TO RESCUE HIM.



O KARNA, THE HUMILIATION I FELT AS I WAS RELEASED FROM CAPTIVITY THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF YUDHISHTHIRA! FAR BETTER IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR ME TO HAVE DIED IN THE BATTLE THAN TO HAVE BEEN SAVED AS A RESULT OF A FAVOUR DONE BY THE PANDAVAS.



NOW LISTEN TO WHAT I HAVE TO SAY. I WILL STAY HERE FOR—GOING ALL FOOD WHILE ALL OF YOU RETURN HOME. I HAVE DONE A HIGHLY IMPROPER AND WICKED ACT FOR WHICH I WILL PERISH BY STARVING.



AND IF I RETURN NOW AFTER BEING INSULTED BY MY FOES, I WILL BE A SOURCE OF SORROW TO MY FRIENDS.



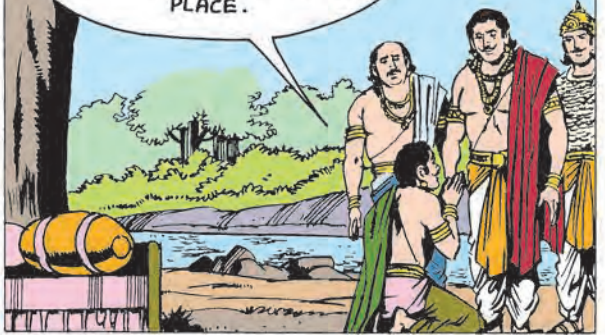
"THEN TURNING TO DUHSHASANA, DURYODHANA SAID —

O DUHSHASANA, RETURN TO HASTINAPURA AND RULE IN MY PLACE. CHERISH YOUR SUPERIORS, GIVE CHARITY TO BRAHMANAS, GIVE REFUGE TO FRIENDS AND DEFEND THE KINGDOM.



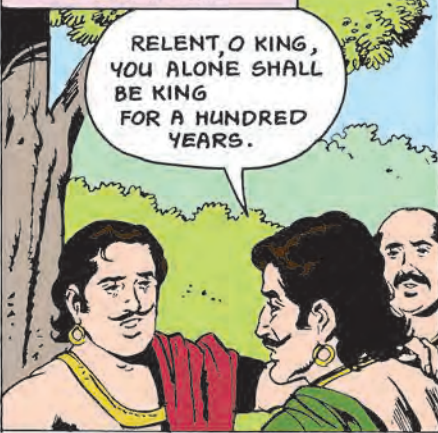
"DUHSHASANA WAS SO MOVED BY GRIEF THAT HE FELL AT HIS BROTHER'S FEET.

RELENT, O KING, THIS WILL NEVER BE. THE EARTH MAY SPLIT, THE HEAVEN MAY BREAK INTO PIECES, THE SUN MAY CAST OFF HIS SPLENDOR, BUT I CANNOT RULE IN YOUR PLACE.



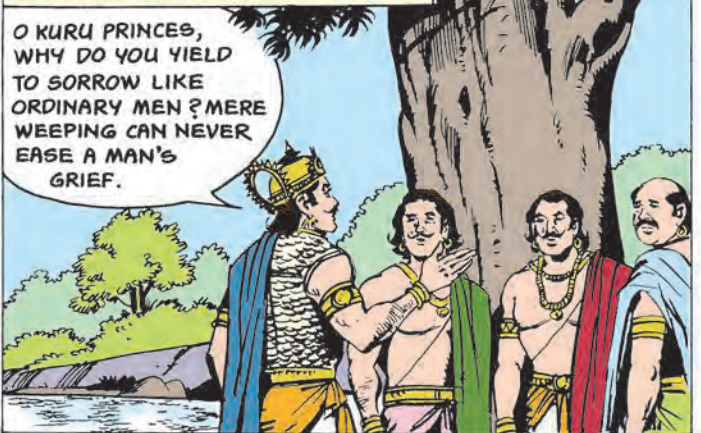
"NOW WEeping INCONSOLABLY DUHSHASANA SAID —

RELENT, O KING, YOU ALONE SHALL BE KING FOR A HUNDRED YEARS.

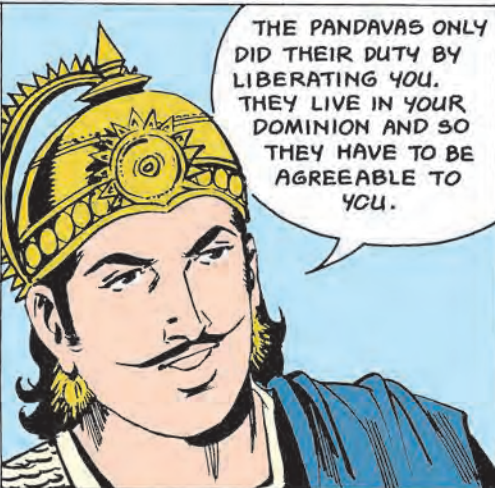


"BEHOLDING THE TWO BROTHERS WEeping THUS, KARNA SAID —

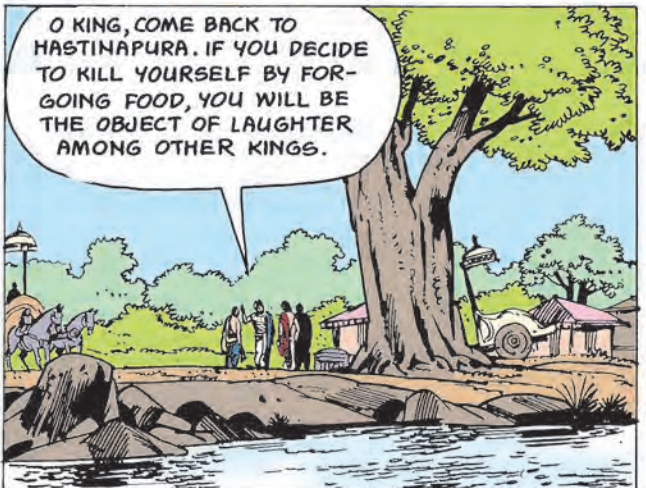
O KURU PRINCES, WHY DO YOU YIELD TO SORROW LIKE ORDINARY MEN? MERE WEeping CAN NEVER EASE A MAN'S GRIEF.



THE PANDAVAS ONLY DID THEIR DUTY BY LIBERATING YOU. THEY LIVE IN YOUR DOMINION AND SO THEY HAVE TO BE AGREEABLE TO YOU.



O KING, COME BACK TO HASTINAPURA. IF YOU DECIDE TO KILL YOURSELF BY FOR-GOING FOOD, YOU WILL BE THE OBJECT OF LAUGHTER AMONG OTHER KINGS.



"SHAKUNI CONSOLED DURYODHANA.

KARNA IS RIGHT.
WHY DO YOU WISH TO
FORGO THE WEALTH
I HAVE WON FOR YOU
FROM THE PANDAVAS?

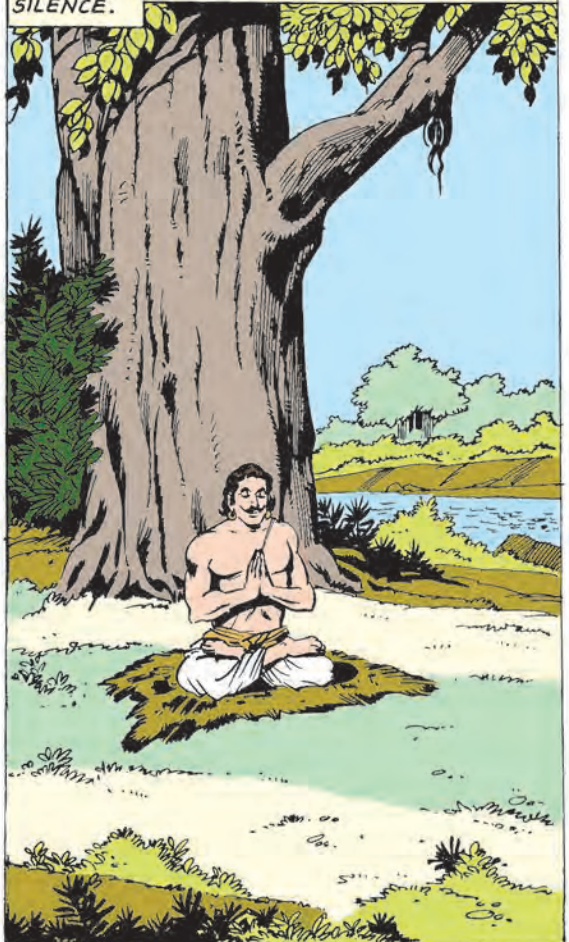


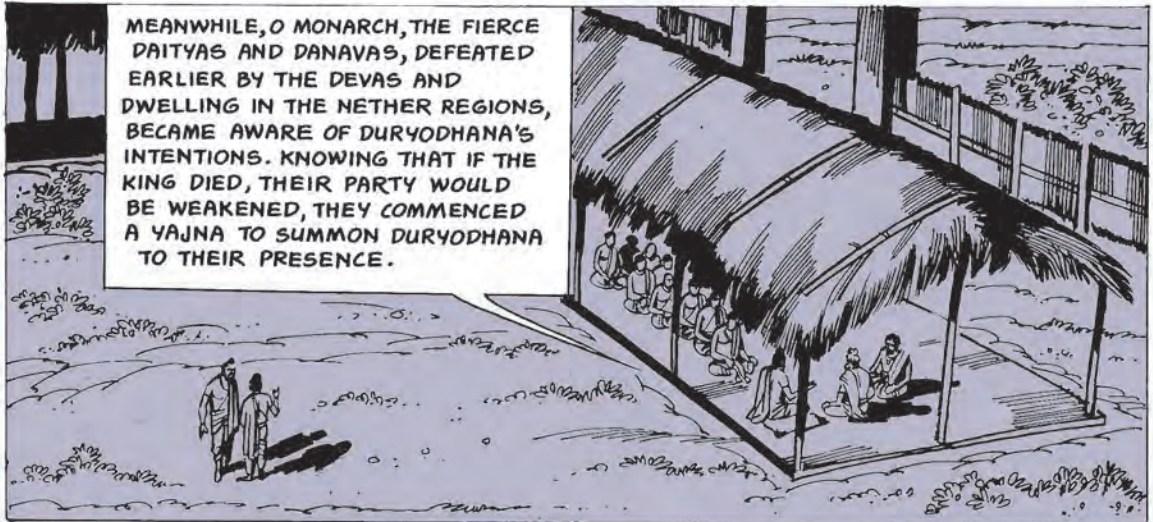
"AFTER HEARING ALL THAT HIS FRIENDS AND
BROTHERS HAD TO SAY, DURYODHANA
ANSWERED WITH SORROW.

I HAVE NOTHING MORE
TO DO WITH VIRTUE, WEALTH,
FRIENDSHIP, AFFLUENCE,
SOVEREIGNTY AND PLEASURES.
DO NOT COME IN THE WAY OF MY
RESOLVE, BUT LEAVE ME ALONE.
I AM FIRMLY RESOLVED TO CAST
AWAY MY LIFE BY FORGOING FOOD.
RETURN TO THE CITY AND TREAT
MY SUPERIORS THERE RESPECT-
FULLY.



"THEN, CLAD IN RAGS, HE SPREAD KUSHA GRASS
ON THE EARTH AND PREPARED HIMSELF TO
OBSERVE THE HIGHEST VOW OF LAYING DOWN
HIS LIFE. HE PRAYED AND WORSHIPPED IN
SILENCE.





"THE DEITY TOOK DURYODHANA TO THE NETHER REGIONS WHERE THE DANAVAS WERE EAGERLY AWAITING HER RETURN.

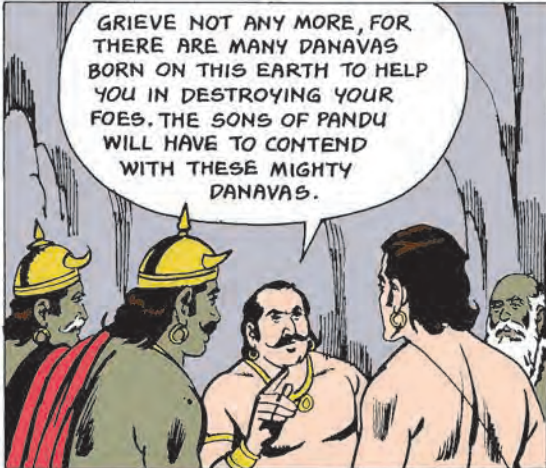
O KING, WHY HAVE YOU UNDERTAKEN SUCH A RASH ACT?



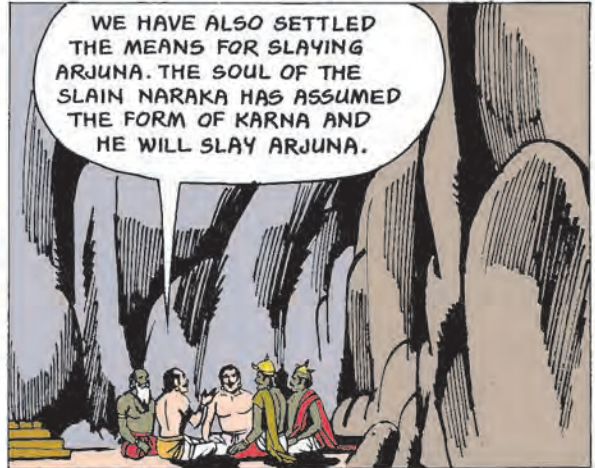
O DURYODHANA, YOU ARE OF CELESTIAL ORIGIN, THE CREATION OF MAHESHWARA AND HIS GODDESS. AND WE HAVE OBTAINED YOU BY ASCETIC AUSTERITIES FROM MAHESHWARA.



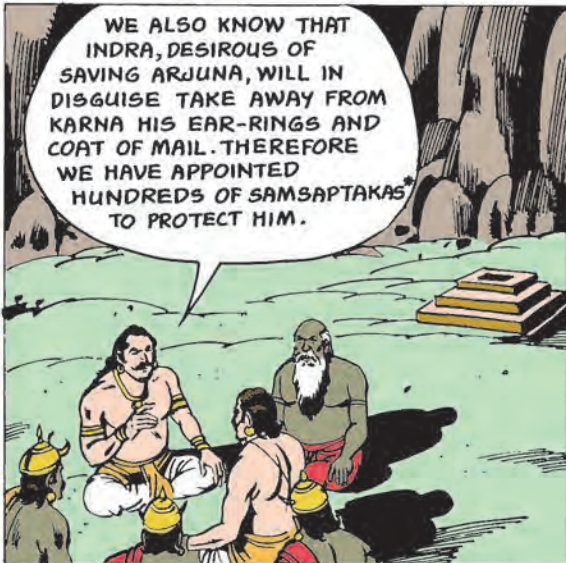
GRIEVE NOT ANY MORE, FOR THERE ARE MANY DANAVAS BORN ON THIS EARTH TO HELP YOU IN DESTROYING YOUR FOES. THE SONS OF PANDU WILL HAVE TO CONTENT WITH THESE MIGHTY DANAVAS.



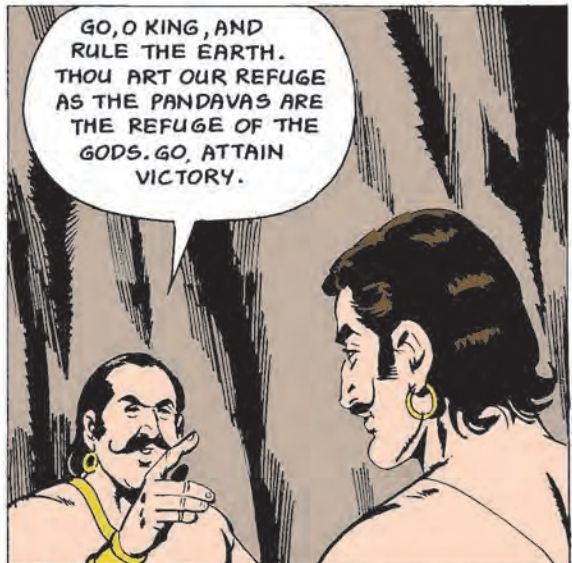
WE HAVE ALSO SETTLED THE MEANS FOR SLAYING ARJUNA. THE SOUL OF THE SLAIN NARAKA HAS ASSUMED THE FORM OF KARNA AND HE WILL SLAY ARJUNA.



WE ALSO KNOW THAT INDRA, DESIROUS OF SAVING ARJUNA, WILL IN DISGUISE TAKE AWAY FROM KARNA HIS EAR-RINGS AND COAT OF MAIL. THEREFORE WE HAVE APPOINTED HUNDREDS OF SAMAPTAKAS* TO PROTECT HIM.

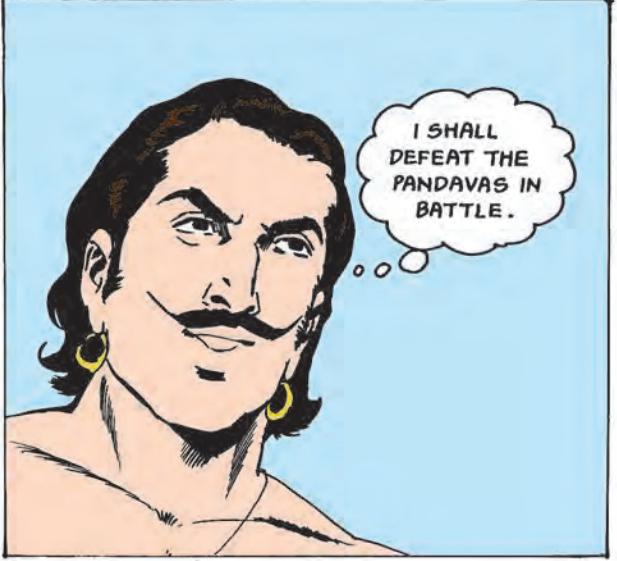


GO, O KING, AND RULE THE EARTH. THOU ART OUR REFUGE AS THE PANDAVAS ARE THE REFUGE OF THE GODS. GO, ATTAIN VICTORY.

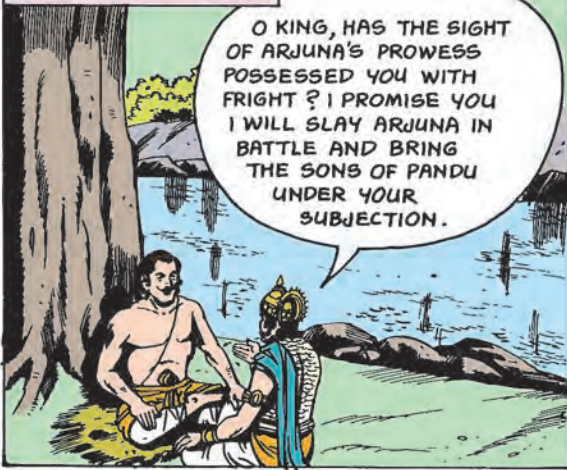


* SOLDIERS THAT HAVE SWORN TO CONQUER OR DIE. A FULL ARMY OF THESE SOLDIERS WAS OWNED BY KRISHNA, WHO GAVE THEM TO DURYODHANA TO FIGHT FOR HIM.

"THE DEITY THEN CARRIED DURYODHANA BACK TO THE SPOT WHERE HE HAD BEEN MEDITATING."



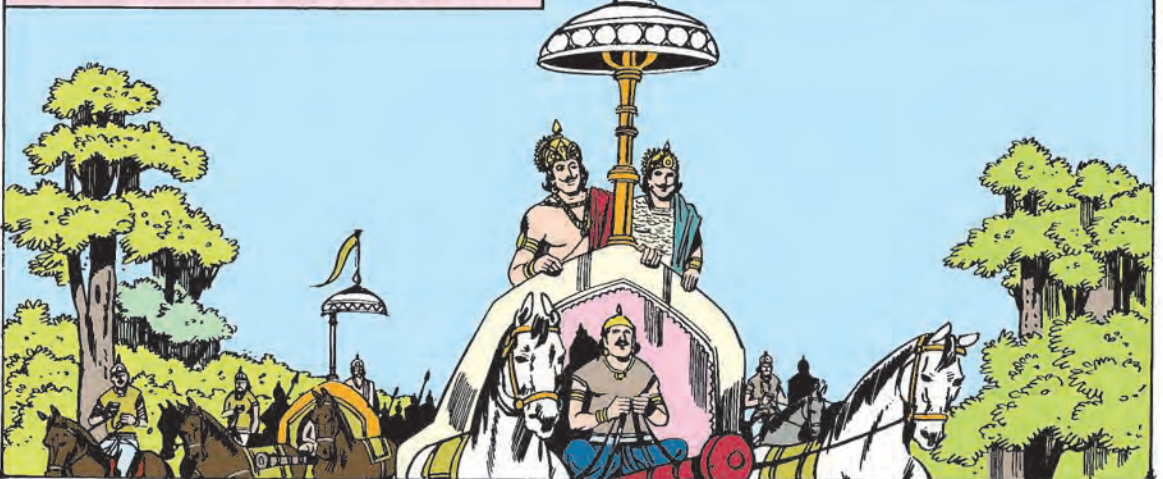
"THE NEXT MORNING KARNA APPROACHED DURYODHANA AGAIN."



"HEARING KARNA'S FIRM RESOLVE AND REMEMBERING THE WORDS OF THE DANAVAS, DURYODHANA ROSE..."

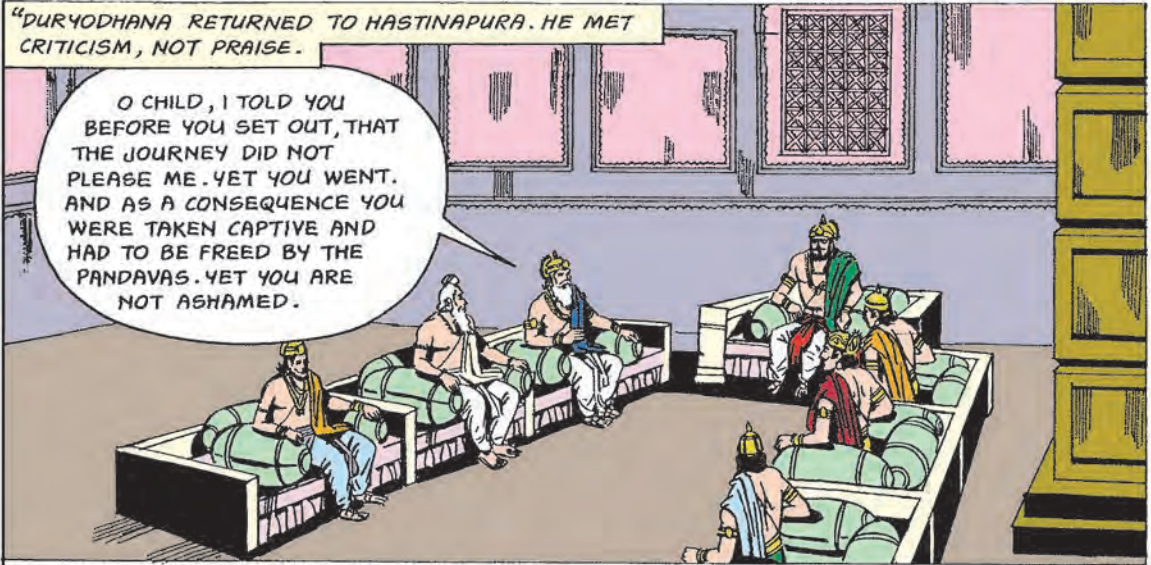


"...AND THEY RETURNED TO HASTINAPURA."

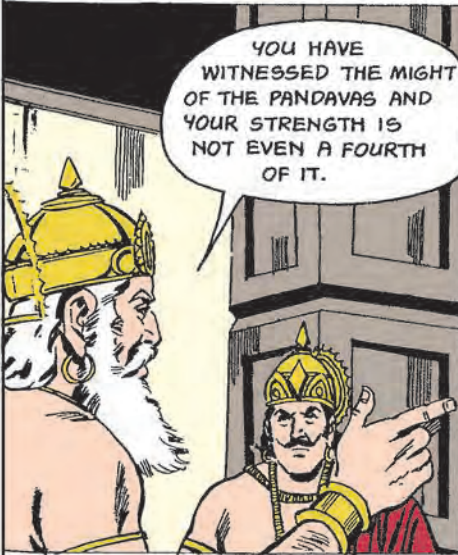


"DURYODHANA RETURNED TO HASTINAPURA. HE MET CRITICISM, NOT PRAISE."

O CHILD, I TOLD YOU BEFORE YOU SET OUT, THAT THE JOURNEY DID NOT PLEASE ME. YET YOU WENT. AND AS A CONSEQUENCE YOU WERE TAKEN CAPTIVE AND HAD TO BE FREED BY THE PANDAVAS. YET YOU ARE NOT ASHAMED.



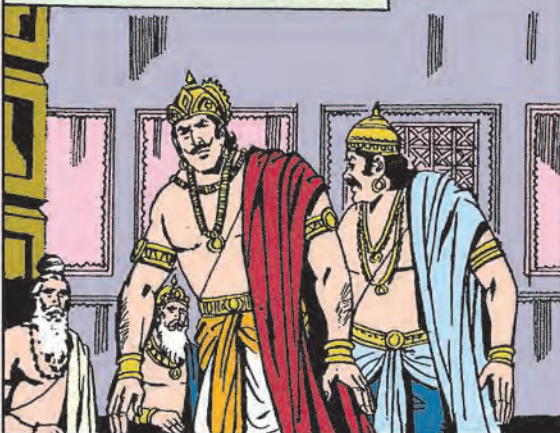
YOU HAVE WITNESSED THE MIGHT OF THE PANDAVAS AND YOUR STRENGTH IS NOT EVEN A FOURTH OF IT.



O DURYODHANA, THEREFORE, FOR THE WELFARE OF THE RACE, CONCLUDE PEACE WITH THE VALIANT SONS OF PANDU.



"ON HEARING THIS, DURYODHANA SAILED OUT OF THE ROOM WITH SHAKUNI..."



"...LEAVING BHEESHMA WHO HUNG HIS HEAD IN SHAME."

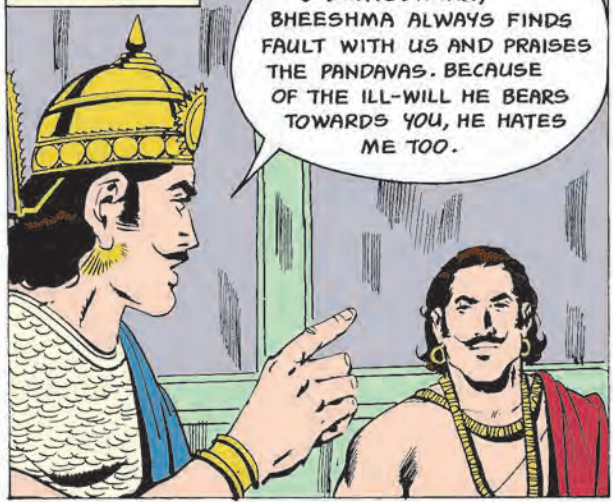


"DURYODHANA THEN DECIDED TO CONSULT HIS COUNSELLORS.



WE MUST DISCUSS TODAY WHAT REMAINS TO BE DONE AND ALSO WHAT WILL BE BENEFICIAL TO ME.

"KARNA SAID —



O DURYODHANA, BHEESHMA ALWAYS FINDS FAULT WITH US AND PRAISES THE PANDAVAS. BECAUSE OF THE ILL-WILL HE BEARS TOWARDS YOU, HE HATES ME TOO.

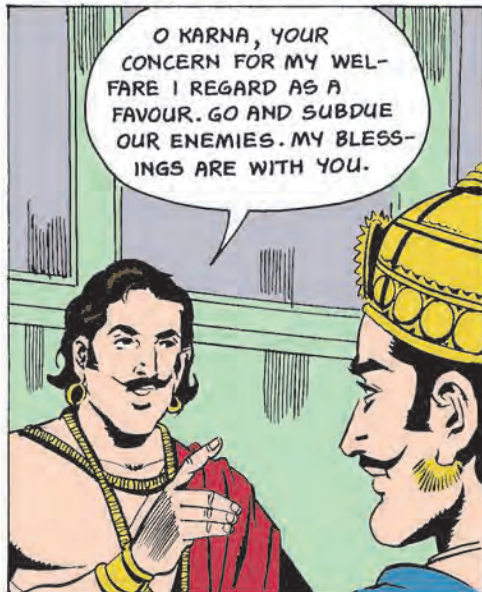
SO, O KING, IF YOU PERMIT ME, I WILL CONQUER THE EARTH SINGLE-HANDED.



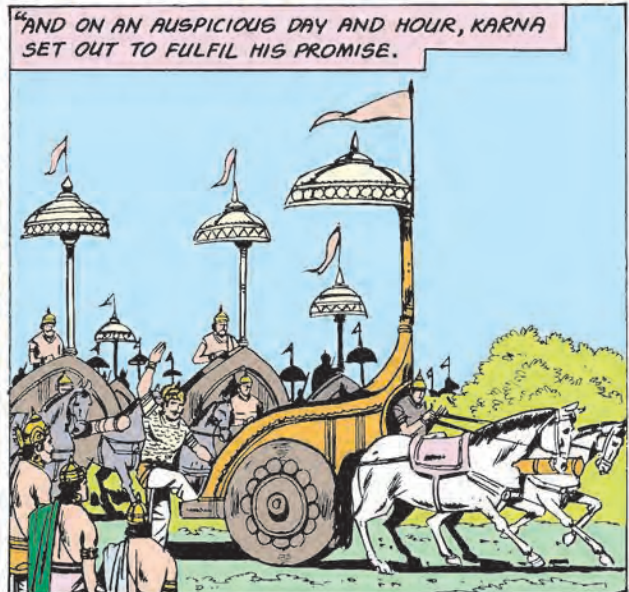
WHAT THE FOUR PANDAVAS DID TOGETHER, I WILL DO SINGLE-HANDED. BHEESHMA WILL SEE IT.



O KARNA, YOUR CONCERN FOR MY WELFARE I REGARD AS A FAVOUR. GO AND SUBDUE OUR ENEMIES. MY BLESSINGS ARE WITH YOU.



"AND ON AN AUSPICIOUS DAY AND HOUR, KARNA SET OUT TO FULFIL HIS PROMISE.



"WITH A LARGE ARMY AT HIS DISPOSAL, KARNA SET OUT TO CONQUER THE WORLD. HE BEGAN BY SUBJUGATING KING DRUPADA, AND THEN CONQUERED ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE NORTH, EAST, SOUTH AND WEST.



"WHEN A VICTORIOUS KARNA RETURNED TO HASTINAPURA, HE WAS RECEIVED WITH HONOUR.

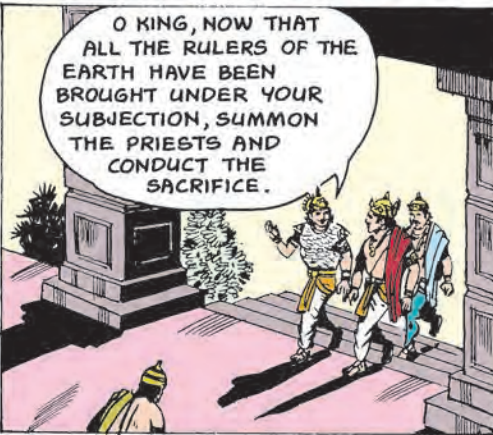
O KARNA, WHAT YOU HAVE DONE FOR ME, NOT EVEN DRONA OR KRIPA OR BHEESHMA HAS BEEN ABLE TO DO. WITHOUT DOUBT NEITHER THE PANDAVAS NOR ANY OTHER KING IS ANY MATCH FOR YOU IN VALOUR.



BUT NOW I WISH TO PERFORM THE MIGHTY RAJASOOYA YAJNA WHICH THE PANDAVAS PERFORMED.

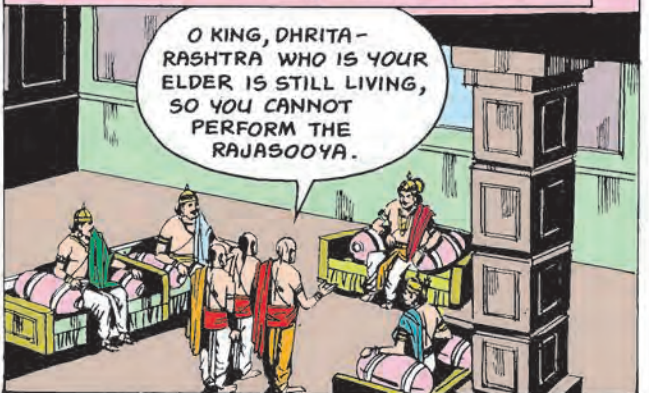


O KING, NOW THAT ALL THE RULERS OF THE EARTH HAVE BEEN BROUGHT UNDER YOUR SUBJECTION, SUMMON THE PRIESTS AND CONDUCT THE SACRIFICE.

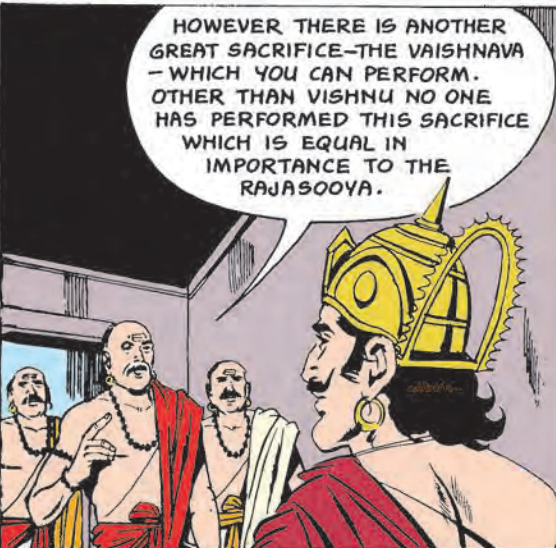


"BUT WHEN THE BRAHMANAS WERE SENT FOR —

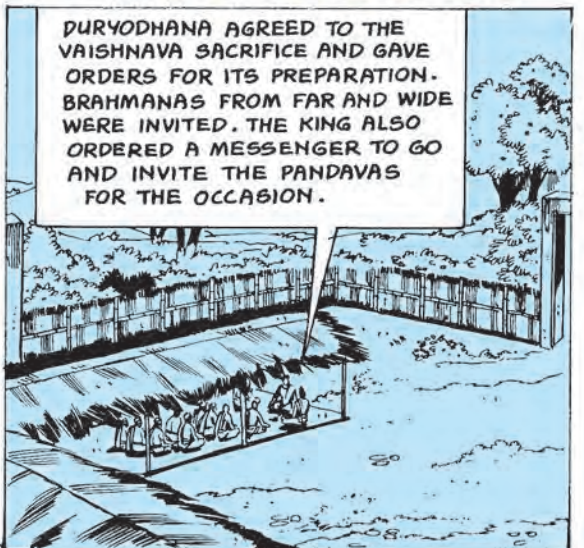
O KING, DHRTA-RASHTRA WHO IS YOUR ELDER IS STILL LIVING, SO YOU CANNOT PERFORM THE RAJASOOYA.



HOWEVER THERE IS ANOTHER GREAT SACRIFICE—THE VAISHNAVA—WHICH YOU CAN PERFORM. OTHER THAN VISHNU NO ONE HAS PERFORMED THIS SACRIFICE WHICH IS EQUAL IN IMPORTANCE TO THE RAJASOOYA.



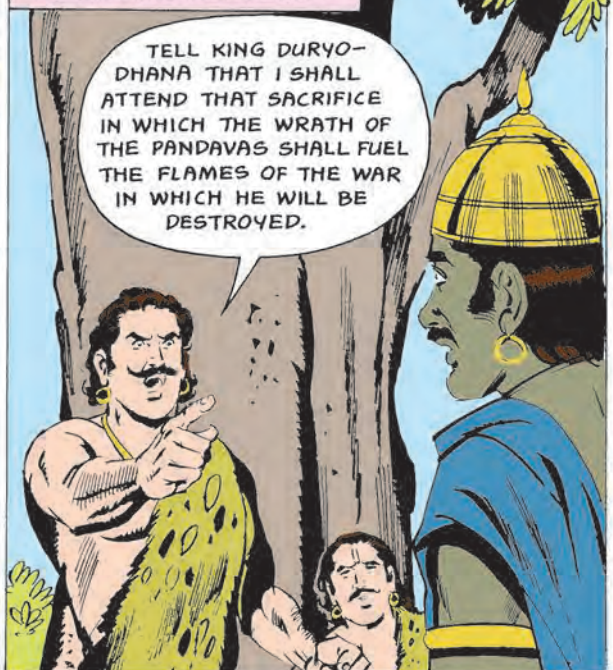
DURYODHANA AGREED TO THE VAISHNAVA SACRIFICE AND GAVE ORDERS FOR ITS PREPARATION. BRAHMANAS FROM FAR AND WIDE WERE INVITED. THE KING ALSO ORDERED A MESSENGER TO GO AND INVITE THE PANDAVAS FOR THE OCCASION.



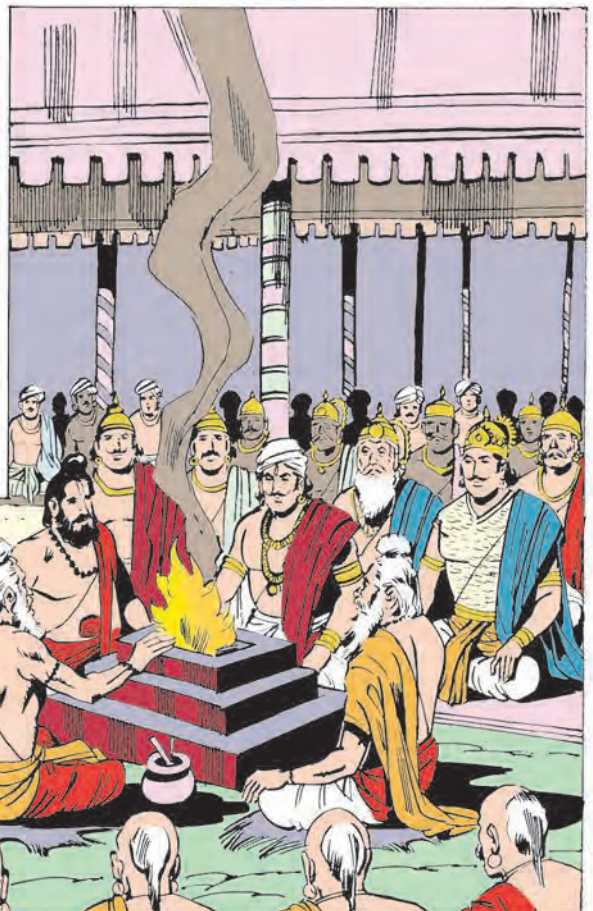
"DURYODHANA'S MESSENGER CONVEYED THE INVITATION TO THE PANDAVAS IN THE FOREST. BUT YUDHISHTHIRA SAID —



"BUT BHEEMA THUNDERED —



"BACK IN HASTINAPURA PREPARATIONS FOR THE SACRIFICE WERE IN FULL SWING.



"THE CITIZENS OF HASTINAPURA WERE OVERJOYED."

THIS SACRIFICE
HAS SURPASSED
ALL OTHERS.



"AND AT THE ROYAL PALACE, KARNA ADDRESSED DURYODHANA —"

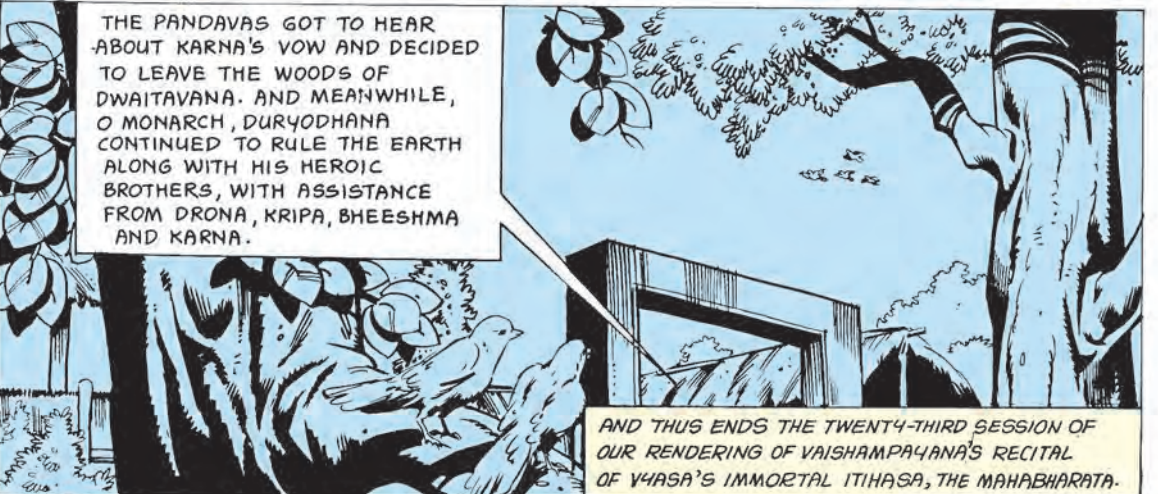
O KING, THE
MIGHTY VAISHNAVA
YAJNA HAS COME TO
AN END. BUT ONCE
WE HAVE DEFEATED
THE PANDAVAS WE
WILL PERFORM THE
RAJASOOYA.



AND HERE I TAKE
A VOW THAT AS
LONG AS I DON'T SLAY
ARJUNA, I SHALL NOT
ALLOW ANY ONE TO WASH
MY FEET. NOR SHALL I
TASTE MEAT OR DRINK
ANY WINE.



THE PANDAVAS GOT TO HEAR
ABOUT KARNA'S VOW AND DECIDED
TO LEAVE THE WOODS OF
DWAITAVANA. AND MEANWHILE,
O MONARCH, DURYODHANA
CONTINUED TO RULE THE EARTH
ALONG WITH HIS HEROIC
BROTHERS, WITH ASSISTANCE
FROM DRONA, KRIPA, BHEESHMA
AND KARNA.



AND THUS ENDS THE TWENTY-THIRD SESSION OF
OUR RENDERING OF VAISHAMPAYANA'S RECITAL
OF VYASA'S IMMORTAL ITIHASA, THE MAHABHARATA.